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ABSTRACT

The United States is in the midst of a school reform movement of unprecedented dimensions, and many educators have felt a need to focus not just on the process but on the purpose of the educational enterprise--the purpose which the reforms are intended to accomplish. A conference, attended by more than 1,100 educators and other interested people, discussed the mission of the schools and made recommendations on how best to realize that mission. Following the keynote address by Robert R. Spillane defining the issues and purposes of the conference, the following papers were presented: (1) "Literacy and the Nation" (E. D. Hirsch, Jr.); (2) "Reaction to E. D. Hirsch" (William R. Raspberry); (3) "Reaction to E.D. Hirsch" (Solomon Lausch); (4) "Ensuring That Schools Achieve Their Mission: A National Perspective" (Paul Simon); (5) "Ensuring That Schools Achieve Their Mission: A State Perspective" (John Murphy); (6) "Supporting the Mission of the Schools in the Schools of the Future" (Marvin Cetron); (7) "How To Achieve the Academic Mission of the Schools for All Students" (Ruth Love); (8) "Teaching To Increase the Academic Emphasis for All Students" (John L. Hynes); (9) "Teaching To Increase the Academic Emphasis for All Students" (Karen Simpson); (10) "Academic Disciplines as the Basis for the School Curriculum" (Graham Down); and (11) "What We Have Accomplished and Where We Go from Here" (Floretta McKenzie). Two reports of group discussions are also included, one following the presentation by, and responses to E. D. Hirsch, Jr., and one just preceding Floretta McKenzie's wrap-up address. (AA)

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The MISSION of the SCHOOLS

to Encourage

to Enlighten

to Enrich

The Record of a National Conference

August 4 - 5, 1987

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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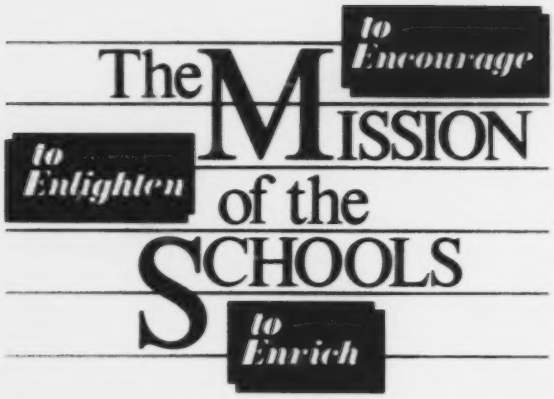

The Record of a National Conference

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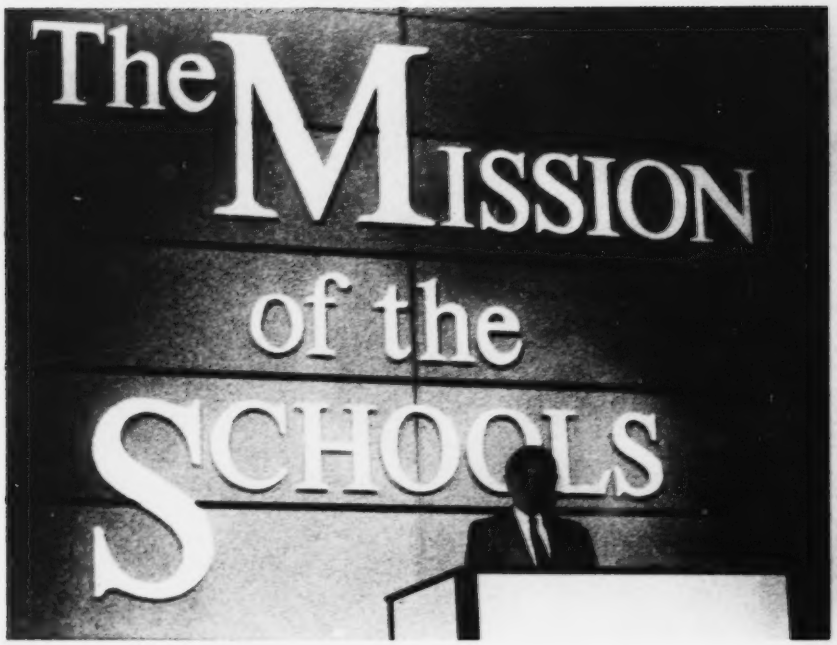
The MISSION
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Introduction

That America is in the midst of a school-reform movement of unprecedented breadth, depth, staying power, and national support is no secret to anyone who follows the news. This reform movement has already led to substantial changes in educational policy and practice, and will lead to many more changes. So far, these changes have benefited both students and the larger society, and some anticipated changes (e.g., professionalization of teaching) will have substantial effects on schooling. But this movement—like many previous school-reform movements—needs to focus not just on the process, but on the purpose of the educational enterprise. In the fall of 1986, a number of educators in the Virginia/District of Columbia area began to discuss the need for a conference which would clarify the purpose of schooling, the purpose which reforms must be designed to better accomplish. The outcome of these discussions was a conference on "The Mission of the Schools," cosponsored by the Fairfax County Public Schools, the District of Columbia Public Schools, and the Curry School of Education and Center for the Liberal Arts of the University of Virginia. The conference was held in Fairfax, Virginia, on August 4-5, 1987.

Over 1100 educators and other interested people, from the Va., D.C. region and elsewhere, attended this conference, which included formal presentations by several speakers (including representatives of national and state governments, journalism, educational advocacy groups, and researchers, as well as school administrators and teachers). The conference provided participants the opportunity to discuss the mission of the schools and to make recommendations about how to better realize that mission. This document is a record of the presentations and discussions at this conference, which, those of us involved in the conference hope, will be the beginning of a national focus on the "Mission of the Schools" as part of the ongoing school-reform movement.

The transcripts of presentations and summaries of discussion are arranged here in the order in which they occurred at the conference. Most of the presentations are in an oral style, and summaries of the discussions try to capture the mood of small-group interchanges. My keynote speech, the first item following this introduction, provides a context for the other items, including a review of the conference events.

Many who read this document will be conference participants, who may be especially interested in reviewing particular presentations which they recall and in looking at the summaries of discussions in which they were involved. Readers who were not conference participants may want to read presentations by particular speakers or may want to read through the entire document to get a feel for the conference as a whole. Whatever you do read of this document, we would appreciate your reactions to it. Please send me any comments you have on any part of this document.

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The Mission of the Schools Conference - 1987 What We Are Here For

Robert R. Spillane
Superintendent
Fairfax County (Va.) Public Schools

It is my honor—as Superintendent of the host institution—to welcome all of you to a very important conference at a critical point in the history of American education.

I want to begin by welcoming, to Fairfax County, those who are attending this conference on the **Mission of the Schools** from other localities. First, I want to welcome those of you from our conference cosponsors: the District of Columbia Public Schools (represented by Superintendent Floretta McKenzie), the Curry School of Education (represented by Dean James Cooper), and the Center for the Liberal Arts (represented by Executive Director Harold Kolb) of the University of Virginia. This cosponsorship has given the conference a breadth of perspective and a depth of intellectual content which one or more of the cosponsors could not otherwise have provided. Next, I want to thank those of you from other localities—some from the Virginia/District of Columbia/Maryland area and others from other parts of the nation. Among other things, you will help all of us focus on the truly *national* character of the mission of the schools.

What do we mean by the schools' "mission"? We are not, I don't think, talking about the "mission statements" which many of us have developed after many meetings and plenty of feedback, statements which describe *all* the things a school system is expected to do. What we *are* talking about is that essential mission which makes a school a school and not some other kind of institution.

When we look for the *essential* mission of schools, we can't assume that it is only to "meet the needs of students," since many institutions, including the family, meet their needs. Certainly, the schools *share* responsibility, with families and other institutions, for meeting many types of young people's needs. Also, meeting these needs (such as physical, emotional, and moral needs) contributes to and complements the schools' primary mission. However, schools were established to meet, and should be held responsible for meeting, specific *types* of needs, and if they fail to meet these types of needs they fail—even if they manage to meet *all* the other needs of young people.

In 1987, most of us know fairly well what schools cannot do alone. The schools alone cannot eliminate racism in our society. The schools cannot guarantee reduction of drug use, sexual activity, or violent activity by young people outside the buildings and property of the school—although we can and should stop such activity in the schools. The schools cannot ensure that our young people will eat more nutritious meals or avoid unhealthful habits. The schools cannot guarantee a better life for all mankind, more sensitivity to the needs of others, and world peace.

If schools take primary responsibility for every aspect of children's development and for alleviating every social ill, they may not be able to take responsibility for the things they *can* do. If parents ask why their children are not learning to read, write, and do mathematics, are not learning enough history to know the difference between Julius Caesar and Napoleon, are not learning the difference between DNA and the periodic

table of the elements, we should not answer that children are, instead, learning to feel better about themselves, to get in touch with their sexuality, to know the difference between hashish and cocaine and the relative Penalties for the possession of each, to understand the common qualities of being human, and to make their home environments more democratic. If the school is responsible for doing everything, then it cannot be *held* responsible for doing anything in particular. Overselling the schools makes it possible for schools to *avoid* responsibility.

"Schools context for teaching the whole child is to provide that child with meaningful academic learning, because children need this learning, and this is the need which schools were established to meet. If they don't meet this need, they fail."

Schools *can*, however, give *every* child a high-quality education which will allow that child to make sense of the world he will face as an adult and to help to change that world. The schools can give every child—black, brown, white, native-English-speaking, or limited-English-proficient—the kind of education, which, in the past, only the elite of our society have received. This is the kind of education which will give *every* child an equal opportunity not only to get a job, but to get the *best* job . . . not only to go to college, but to compete in college with the best students . . . not only to earn a living, but to make important contributions in business, the professions, intellectual life, and the arts. We should not *undersell* schools' ability to do this.

This, in my opinion, is what schools were established to do. This does *not* mean that schools do not teach the "whole child," but it does mean that their *context* for teaching the whole child is to provide that child with meaningful academic learning, because children *need* this learning, and this is the need which schools were established to meet. If they don't meet this need, they fail. There are many reasons that academic learning is so important. These reasons include the employment requirements of an increasingly diverse and changing economy, the society's need for citizens who can understand the issues of the day, and the individual's need for an intellectual framework with which to make sense of the world. In any case, our society has established schools to ensure that students acquire academic learning, and we must accept this responsibility.

To put this into context, I would like to look at the quotes in the conference brochure. On the back of the brochure is a quote from Fred Hechinger of the *New York Times*. He says:

Whatever the problem, schools are expected to offer the cure. This obscures the proper functions for which school should be held accountable.

"If anything, it is more important that the non-college-bound receive a strong academic education in elementary and secondary school than it is for the college-bound."

Hechinger is saying more or less what I have just said. We need to consider what our "proper functions" are and take responsibility for them—*not* for every need every student may have, because if we are responsible for everything we are responsible, and *accountable*, for nothing.

On the reverse side of the brochure, is a quote from the College Board's publication "Academic Preparation for the World of Work," a report on what businessmen and others said they wanted their high-school-educated employees to have learned. This quote says:

> High-quality academic preparation for all students is more important now than at any other time in our nation's history.

In other words, we can no longer say that only the "college-bound" should have a strong academic education, even if we assume—as I would not—that preparation for the world of work should be the *only* educational goal for the non-college-bound. If anything, it is *more* important that the *non*-college-bound receive a strong academic education in elementary and secondary school than it is for the college-bound. Those going on to college will have opportunities to acquire academic learning *there*. For those *not* going to college, elementary and secondary school are likely to be their *last* opportunity to acquire academic learning. By providing *all* students with academic learning, the schools are doing what they can to *oppose elitism* and to *foster equality*. I remember the great black sociologist Kenneth Clark—when he was on the New York State Board of Regents—arguing against providing academic education only for the

"college-bound"; he called it"Jim Crow Education." The intellectual power of academic learning can be developed, in some measure, in *all* children, and it is elitist to believe that it cannot.

The third quote is just inside the front cover of the brochure, at the top of the page, and it's by Albert Einstein. Einstein said:

> Perfection of means and confusion of ends seems to characterize our age.

From the man who repeatedly stressed the need for scientists to serve the interests of humanity, yet whose work lay behind the atomic bomb, this statement has special meaning. As educators improve the means of instruction and the technologies behind the delivery of instruction, as we improve teacher compensation and evaluation, staff development and organization, facilities and transportation, as we perfect the *means*—we need to focus on the *ends*: what are we working to accomplish?

That brings me to the final quote in the brochure, which is highlighted on the same page as the Einstein quote. This last quote comes from a book which Arthur Bestor wrote over 30 years ago, and we are using it as the point of departure for the conference discussion. Bestor wrote:

> An indispensable function of education, at every level, is to provide sound training in the fundamental ways of thinking represented by history, science, mathematics, literature, language, art, and the other disciplines evolved in the course of mankind's long quest for usable knowledge, cultural understanding, and intellectual power. To advance moral conduct, responsible citizenship, and social adjustment is, of course, a vital function of education. But, like the other agencies which contribute to these ends, the school must work within the context provided by its own characteristic activity. In other words, the particular contribution which the school can make is determined by, and related to, the primary fact that it is an agency of intellectual training.

Well, this was a concern 30 years ago, and, as the Hechinger quote indicates, it is a concern today—but why? Actually, the relationship between academic learning and other school functions has been a concern in America at least since 1911, when the National Education Association's publication, *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education*, provided a view of educational mission very different from that which the NEA's "Committee of Ten" had established less than 20 years before. The "Cardinal Principles" were:

1. Health
2. Command of fundamental processes
3. Worthy home-membership
4. Vocation
5. Citizenship
6. Worthy use of leisure
7. Ethical character

Where were the academic subjects which were the whole substance of the report 20 years before? Is "command of fundamental processes" supposed to stand for reading, writing, math, history, art, science, music, literature, languages, and other academic disciplines? Is "worthy use of leisure" as important as all these? Is "worthy home-membership" the primary responsibility of the school, rather than of the home itself? Is the school a generalized "service provider" with no clear focus on academic learning?

The "Committee of Ten" had put academic learning at the center of the schools' mission. Twenty years later, it was at the periphery, at best. Since these two conflicting reports came out around the turn of this century, defining the mission of the schools has been a major concern of educators.

"Since the turn of the century, defining the mission of the schools has been a major concern of educators."

"This conference calls for a reemphasis on the central task of providing academic learning for all students as the schools' mission."

The recent school-reform reports—"Nation at Risk," "Nation Prepared," "Time for Results," "Shopping Mall High School," "A Place Called School," and many others, including those of the College Board to which I have already referred—have brought changes in state and local education policy across the nation. Course requirements for graduation have been increased. Standardized testing programs have grown. Calls for more accountability from school administrators, teachers, and teacher educators are bringing changes to the entire educational enterprise. At the same time, schools are being called on to solve problems such as drug abuse, AIDS, teen pregnancy, and the need for quality day care.

The conference cosponsors—along with educational institutions throughout the Nation—are helping to improve education. For instance, in Fairfax County, the 1987-88 school year will see the first year of a systemwide teacher performance evaluation system which will mean pay-for-performance in 1989-90 and will serve as the basis for a truly professionalized teacher workforce. The District of Columbia Public Schools have instituted a secondary-school improvement initiative which involves building-based planning to improve student achievement and school operation. The Curry School of Education is developing new ways to ensure that its teacher graduates have the integrated knowledge of pedagogy and subject matter which they will need to ensure the degree of academic learning our students need to acquire. The University of Virginia's Center for the Liberal Arts helps teachers in several Virginia school districts to enhance their knowledge of the subjects they teach. All the conference sponsors are deeply involved in the kinds of activities which have enlivened schools, universities, and state policy makers throughout the nation during the current period of educational reform.

Most of these and other changes being made are changes in the *process* of education, changes in what Einstein would call the *means* of education. As Einstein pointed out, we sometimes seem to have *perfected* the means without paying enough attention to the *ends*—to the *purpose* of education. This conference will focus on that purpose, which we must keep constantly in mind as we make changes in process. This conference calls for a reemphasis on the central task of providing academic learning for *all* students as the schools' mission.

One sign that this conference is necessary at this point is a recent reaction to the reform movement by the Forum of Education Organization leaders. In a report issued on July 1 of this year, the Forum called for the federal government to "legislatively guarantee to each at-risk youngster the array of necessary educational services which are reasonably calculated to result in his or her graduation from high school." At the meeting of the Forum at which this report was distributed, demographer Harold Hodgkinson claimed that higher standards may *exacerbate* the problems of at-risk youths by making more students fail and drop out. Schools need—*now*—to focus on their mission and on making sure whatever changes they make will better ensure this mission is accomplished for *all* students.

What does all this mean? If I, or Floretta McKenzie of the D.C. schools, or Jim Cooper of the Curry School of Education, or Hal Kolb of the Center for the Liberal Arts had the complete answer to that question, we probably wouldn't have to have this conference. We hope we will begin to get the answer today and tomorrow. But I think I can say that schools' academic standards need to be high—if they are not, the school fails. We must be sure that *all* students get a quality academic education if they don't, the school fails.

The schools do many valuable things for children, and many of these things contribute to academic learning—make it possible, make it easier, make it relevant. Many other things the schools do they do because all (at least most) young people are in school, so that if you want to be sure all young people get a particular service or a particular opportunity,

school is the place to do that. But the school does *all* these things in the context of its primary mission of academic learning—and I mean to say "learning," not just "teaching." Kids don't learn if teachers don't show they care about them. The learning isn't meaningful if the teachers don't make it so. Students won't learn if the school is not a significant place for students. We need to ensure all these conditions of the atmosphere in which learning can take place.

The goal of the conference today and tomorrow is for all of us to think and talk about what it will mean to reemphasize academic learning as the school's mission. What will this emphasis on the *purpose* of education mean to the changes in *process* now underway in American school systems?

In a few minutes, I will introduce Prof. E.D. Hirsch of the University of Virginia, whose book—*Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*—has been on the best-seller list this summer. After Prof. Hirsch's presentation—and a break—a panel made up of *Washington Post* columnist William Raspberry and Solomon Lausch, a high school principal in the Baltimore public schools, will react to his presentation. Then, all of us will go to the classrooms we have been assigned to for the conference for small-group discussions of what we hear this afternoon. (Output from these discussions will be available tomorrow.)

After coffee and donuts tomorrow morning, Sen. Paul Simon of Illinois and Assistant Commissioner John Murphy of New York State will discuss the schools' mission from the national and state perspectives. Following a break, some of you will come back to this auditorium to hear Ruth Love—former superintendent in Chicago, and member of the Paideia Group—discuss how to achieve the schools' academic mission for *all* students, and some of you will go to the cafeteria to hear professional forecaster Marvin Cetron discuss the role of school support services in the schools' mission. After this, we will go again to our assigned rooms to see teachers from Fairfax County and the District of Columbia demonstrate lessons they use to provide academic learning and to discuss actual classroom practice for accomplishing the mission of the schools.

After lunch tomorrow, John Hynes, a junior high school teacher from upstate New York, and Karen Simpson, a Texas elementary school principal, will discuss the impact which increased emphasis on academic learning for all students will have on curriculum and teaching. Following a break, Graham Down, Executive Director of the Council for Basic Education, will describe the importance of academic disciplines as the basis for the school curriculum.

Following Mr. Down's presentation—at 3:30 tomorrow—we will go for the last time to our assigned small-group rooms, each group with a specific task to complete. This session is very important, because it will give us *your* best thinking about the mission of the schools in the context of all we will have learned today and tomorrow. This thinking —reflected in the reports of your groups—will help us to plan activities to follow up on the conference.

The final conference event—at 4 p.m. tomorrow—will be Floretta McKenzie's conference wrap-up, in which she will discuss what we will have accomplished at this conference and where we will be going from here.

One thing we *will* be doing after the conference is putting together a document capturing the presentations and discussions. All of you will receive a copy.

I know that this conference will not find answers to all the questions concerning the mission of the schools, and you will not have an opportunity to deal with all of them here. Some of these issues are obvious: What is academic learning and how do you provide it to all students? How do we ensure that *every* student acquires academic learning?

"But the school does <u>all</u> these things in the context of its primary mission of academic learning"

"I see this conference as an important beginning to a national refocus of educational leaders on their purpose."

But there are other issues: How do we ensure adequate access to vocational education in schools dedicated to the mission of academic learning? Are there young people who *cannot* achieve *any* amount of academic learning and what do we do for them? How do we ensure that differences in race, socio-economic status, and social class do not interfere with students acquiring academic learning? How do socialization, the affective domain, and concern for the "whole child" relate to the schools' mission? Some of these issues may come up at this conference, but the other cosponsors and I would like to hear from any of you if you have comments on these or other conference-related issues.

I see this conference as an important beginning to a national refocus of educational leaders on their purpose. Only with such a focus, will the current reform movement bring about the kind of change which will truly prepare our children for the 21st century in which they will live as adults. I count on all of you to help us get there. ■

Literacy and the Nation

E. D. Hirsch, Jr.
Professor of English
University of Virginia

Author of *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*

I decided to entitle my talk "Literacy and the Nation" to stress some general ideas that are advanced in my book *Cultural Literacy*, but which have been ignored in most reviews. Many reviewers have not recognized that the book is really about literacy, not lists. More particularly it is about achieving universal literacy in our nation. It's not *about* an alphabetical list of items. Near the end of my remarks I'll comment on the list and on some responses to it, and discuss some of the practical steps that need to be taken to achieve universal literacy. But mainly, in this talk, I want to take the larger view of things that sponsored my interest in the subject in the first place.

Today, we have the means and knowledge to achieve universal literacy in our country, because we have before us not only the positive results of empirical reading research, but also the negative results of the nontraditional, fragmented curriculum of the past two or three decades. As the modern, "relevant" curriculum has advanced, the ability of schoolchildren to read has declined. We now know why the one event caused the other. We have unwittingly performed perhaps the largest educational experiment ever undertaken, with the number of experimental subjects—our own children—numbering in the tens of millions. The critical variable has been a sea change in the American school from a traditional, literate curriculum to a relevant, skills curriculum. The result of the experiment has been a decline, by all measures, in the advanced reading abilities of children in the later grades. Reading research explains why this decline has occurred, and (this is the good news) why a change in our curriculum can reverse the trend.

Some people who have heard about the curriculum reforms advocated in *Cultural Literacy* have seriously misunderstood the meaning of the term "cultural literacy." They have assumed that it is just something that should be superadded to basic reading skills. In case some of you might share this assumption about cultural literacy, I want to stress right away that cultural literacy is not something superadded, but is, in fact, a part, an aspect, of literacy itself. Reading skill is not the abstract skill it has been thought to be. Mature literacy is indeed a general skill, but it is not the sort of empty *formal* technique described in many pedagogy textbooks. An educated, literate person does indeed possess the skill of skills which is mature literacy. But it is an acquired ability that consists in having a wide array of specific information which other literate people in the culture also possess. General literacy implies general knowledge.

My book makes the point that you can't read a wide array of serious materials without having a wide array of information that those materials take for granted. I wish, therefore, to define **literacy** simply as **the ability to read diverse materials directed to a general reader**. That's the level of literacy we want for every adult in this country, and it should be the baseline definition of literacy for high school graduates. Every high school graduate should be able to read *The New York Times* or *The New Republic* with understanding. That is the level of skill that I mean by the term "literacy," and I shall not use the term for anything less. Lower levels are preliteracy, that is, 5th grade or 6th grade literacy and so on.

This speech is based on an article which will be published in NEA Today Issues '88
(c) 1987 E.D. Hirsch

"I wish, therefore, to define literacy simply as the ability to read diverse materials directed to a general reader."

If every American adult could read a serious newspaper with understanding, a number of benefits would follow, and I think it is worth enumerating some of them. It would raise the real and relative income of our poorest citizens. Why? Because it would make them more productive participants in the economy, and that in turn would make our national economy more competitive in the world. American workers would be much more flexible in adapting to new jobs and technologies. Universal literacy would also raise the level of print culture and TV culture. I was told by a television reporter for a commercial station that he was permitted only one word above 7th-grade level per news story. That is the level of understanding he could assume in his audience. It isn't the fault of TV that this should be so. The level of TV will rise when our general level of literacy does. Needless to say, a rise in literacy will also cause a rise in the level of our political discussion and debate.

Although the goal of true literacy for every citizen by 12th grade is an ambitious one, it is a goal that we have the means and knowledge to accomplish. We know today, with more precision than ever before, how to achieve that goal. We know that we should start imparting literate knowledge in the earliest grades. And we know, within reasonable limits, what that knowledge consists of. We know enough to make every school teacher a Henry Higgins, who can transform every Eliza Dolittle into a duchess.

Professor Henry Higgins was modelled on Professor Henry Sweet, who was the most distinguished linguist in late Victorian England. To George Bernard Shaw, it was critically important to the point he was making that Henry Higgins should be a world-class expert who knew exactly what he was doing, and was able to discriminate the essential elements that Eliza needed to know. Shaw's *Pygmalion* (which is, of course, the basis for My *Fair Lady*) is a very profound statement about education. He wanted to show that the difference in social class between a Covent-Garden flower girl and a duchess consisted in a limited body of knowledge that could be taught fairly quickly under expert instruction. Part of Shaw's purpose in *Pygmalion* was to demystify social class and, with it, the linguistic competence that constitutes social class. Exactly the same point can be made about teaching mature literacy to our own citizens. Shaw, a socialist, was a true prophet of the ideal education in a democracy.

Shaw's conception, in fact, coincides with the traditional American conception of national education in the late 19th and early 20th century. Our schools were to transform all comers, only instead of turning everyone into an aristocrat, they were to turn everyone into an American—the equal of anybody. It was a noble and inspiring ideal, and one that we are in danger of forgetting. To be reminded of it, one cannot do better than to visit the Great Hall at the City College of New York, where the cathedral-shaped building is a kind of temple to the ideal of education as Americanization. Along the nave of the Great Hall are circular stained glass windows which depict no religious scenes or sentiments, but display the mottos and seals of great American universities. Then, behind the altar, where lectures are given, you can see a huge mural which is the focus of the vast room. At the left, the painting depicts a crowd of huddled masses yearning to breathe free. But as the scene progresses to the right, the bent and ragged figures are touched by the wand of the radiant goddess of education, from whose touch they emerge with mortar boards on their heads, erect and beaming. Education has transformed them into equal citizens.

> The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains
> Scepterless, free, uncircumscribed—but man
> Equal, unclassed, tribeless . . .
> Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
> Over himself.

As Shelley said.

This inspiring vision of national education has been criticized in recent years as cultural imperialism. Instead of continuing to indoctrinate every one in the literate national culture, we should encourage multicultural diversity. But what this new conception omits to notice is that Eliza Dolittle is precisely as multicultural as she might wish to be. She can break into Cockney whenever she likes, and because she has also learned the standard literate language, she can communicate with anyone in the land, effectively and as an equal. She has become enriched, not disenfranchised.

The benefit to Eliza as an individual is multiplied enormously when one considers the benefit to the nation that would ensue if our whole educational system were to operate on Shaw's design. The first consequence would be, of course, universal literacy, whose benefits I have already mentioned. We could all address each other as equals, with understanding and civility. No other national effort that we could make would be more likely to promote the general welfare and insure domestic tranquility. By contrast, no principle is more likely to defeat those fundamental aims of our *Constitution* than the encouragement of cultural separation, which promotes illiteracy, incivility, and class warfare, not to mention low economic productivity.

In alluding to the preamble of *the Constitution* ("promote the general welfare and insure domestic tranquility"), I omitted the very first aim it mentions—"establish justice." I would now like to make some observations about the relevance of cultural literacy (which is to say literacy) to the goal of social justice through education. I want, first of all, to bear down on the very misguided claim that cultural literacy is an elitist educational goal.

No doubt, a casual look at the provisional list printed in the back of my book might give some people an impression of elitism, for two reasons. First, some of the items might be unfamiliar to a particular reader. This quite understandably leads some people to reason as follows: "I'm quite literate, so if I don't know some of the items, the list must be elitist." I am sympathetic to that reaction, and in fact we are constantly adjusting the list to new comments and suggestions. But I believe that the main underlying basis for the accusation of elitism comes from the observation that the list is WASPish and conservative. It seems to enshrine the traditional, British-oriented bias of American literate culture. Some object that the list should contain less of that material, and greater acknowledgement of figures like Harriet Tubman and Crazy Horse. To which I reply, "Yes, indeed, those are good suggestions." But even after such names are included, the list would still remain preponderantly British-oriented and traditional, and thus *apparently* elitist.

In the past it is true that many of the richest and best educated Americans of the 19th and early 20th century were white, Anglo-Saxon and Protestant, and it's true that the literate culture they possessed is still dominantly present in American and British literate culture. But to think that literate culture is WASPish and elitist just because the educated people who possessed it happened to be, is to put the cart before the horse. The WASP elite of America possessed traditional literate culture, not because they were born to it, but because they were educated into it. They had to *learn* literate culture in order to become literate. Moreover, every literate English speaker in Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Australia, Africa, and India, no matter what color or religion, has had to learn that same traditional literate culture of English. Zeus and Athena are not, after all, WASPS. St. Augustine is not a WASP. Confucius is not a WASP. In short, literate culture is in essence neither WASP nor elitist. It is simply the traditional knowledge required for literacy in English.

Linguists have long known that literate culture is inherently and necessarily traditional in character. Literacy preserves traditional forms and traditional points of reference, because the vast numbers of books and people

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who use those forms and points of reference give literacy an inertia which is difficult to change by mere fiat. Everyone is familiar with the inertia of modern English spelling, which exhibits such dispensable oddities as "enough," "doubt," and "light." Yet, very few spelling reforms have taken hold in modern English. Spelling is fixedly conservative, and no sensible liberal would argue against teaching students anything but traditional spellings. This inertia and conservatism of spelling is an extreme example of the traditional and conservative character of all literate culture.

The inherent traditionalism of literacy is a subject that I deal with in Chapter 3 of *Cultural Literacy*, which contains perhaps the most important purely scholarly contribution of my book. The chapter is entitled "National Language and National Culture," and, despite the fact that it is the pivotal chapter of the book, it has been entirely ignored in reviews. Could it be that I didn't surround the chapter with enough rhetorical fanfare, or could its main points be so unpalatable that reviewers preferred to discuss other topics?

Never mind. What Chapter 3 says, in a nutshell, is that every modern nation since the Industrial Revolution has had to create both a standard literate language and a standard literate culture. The two elements, literate national language and culture, reflect each other and were developed to fulfill the same necessity: to create a medium of communication that can be used all over the nation by citizens who are strangers to one another. Only the ability of citizens to communicate over time and space allows industrialized nations to thrive economically and politically. The linguistic and cultural history of every industrial nation in the world has followed or has attempted to follow this pattern. Its success as a nation has partly depended upon its success in forging a standard national literate language and a standard national literate culture. Wherever a nation has failed to achieve this aim, as for example in China, to that extent it has suffered politically and economically.

Despite the unpalatable sound of "standard literate language" and "standard literate culture," both history and logic support the desirability, really the necessity, of cultural and linguistic standardization, without which no large industrial nation has worked or could work. It follows that when fewer and fewer Americans know our traditional linguistic and cultural norms, our nation works less well. Reform of the literate culture, desirable as it may be, can take place only within sharp limits. For after having existed for many centuries, literate culture acquires an inertia that makes it resistant to radical change. Of course, the periphery of literate culture does change. Oliver Norths come and go; Lincoln and Jefferson remain. Because the core of shared literate culture is extended over time and space, and in millions of people and millions of books, its central words and traditions are almost as difficult to change as are its spellings.

The third chapter also deals with another historical fact that has been common to all industrial nations. The literate national language and culture of every nation has necessarily been a school-transmitted language and culture. The chief agents of the modern nation have been not just political and industrial leaders, but also school teachers. School teachers have created the modern nation-state, and school teachers alone can perpetuate it and make it thrive. And when the schools of a nation cease to transmit effectively the national literate language and culture, the unity and effectiveness of the nation will necessarily decline.

It's possible that the American public as a whole instinctively recognizes this fact about the connection of education and nationhood. It may be that the astonishing amount of newspaper coverage that has been given to my book may reflect a recognition of the momentous issues at stake in education reform. So, although my third chapter has not been dealt with in reviews, its implications have been understood instinctively by many people who haven't even opened the book. Instinctively they have under-

stood the conservatism of literacy. A changeable, untraditional curriculum cannot alter literate culture; it simply excludes literate culture from students who happen to come from illiterate homes. A progressive, skills-oriented curriculum merely preserves and consolidates class distinctions and the status quo.

I'll give just one statistical illustration of this historical fact about the social injustice of a progressive curriculum. A few years ago, two economists, Finis Welch and James Smith, published a monograph called *Closing the Gap*. The gap they meant was the income gap between whites and blacks who had finished the same level of education. Welch and Smith showed that the income gap had started to close even before the civil rights movement, and through careful analysis they showed that the chief factor in this progress towards social justice was a gradual equalizing of the quality of education given to whites and blacks. Thus, despite racial prejudice, those who entered the economy with higher skills (chiefly higher literacy skills) gained higher income, regardless of race. As the education gap closed, so did the income gap. And the progress was fairly constant up to the 1970s, when the analysis of Welch and Smith ended.

On the basis of the Welch-Smith analysis, I made a prediction. Because the civil rights movement has now given blacks and whites more equal educational opportunities, one would expect the gap to continue closing, assuming that American education had stayed constant. But we know that the outcomes of education have been declining in the past fifteen years, as indicated by measures of reading ability. Because of this decline, I predicted that the wage gap would start opening up again, because a less effective teaching of literacy would have a more adverse effect on blacks than on whites. My reasoning was that a larger percentage of whites would get some literate culture in their homes, to make up for what was missing in the school curriculum. So, although literacy rates would decline for all students, the decline would be greater for blacks, and this relatively greater decline in literacy would be reflected in the economic sphere. To test the hypothesis , I plotted a year-by-year curve from 1973 to 1983 for the decline in SAT verbal scores. For these same years, I plotted the wage differentials for whites and blacks who went into the workforce with a 12th-grade education. The year-by-year decline in overall literacy almost exactly paralleled the year-by-year re-opening of the wage gap between the races.

Just to make sure from other sources that this socially regressive result had in fact been occurring, I telephoned Dr. Smith, a coauthor of *Closing the Gap*, at the Rand Corporation. He said that my prediction was confirmed by his own current work. The gap has indeed been reopening in the past 10 years for blacks who finish high school. On the other hand, for those blacks who come from middle-class families, and who finish college, the gap has closed completely—another illustration of the socially regressive effect of the recent curriculum for blacks and whites alike. Current American education is now quite color blind. It helps the rich stay rich and the poor stay poor, regardless of race. The importance of a return to a literate curriculum is not, however, limited to poor or minority students. Far from it. The literacy of middle-class children has also been declining, which means that the country as a whole is becoming less literate, just at a time when advanced technology and the widening of the service economy has made high literacy more essential than in previous times. The skills curriculum, which has now been dominant for several decades, is gradually creating a second generation of middle-class students who are even less literate than their parents who studied under the same untraditional skills curriculum. The children of progressively educated parents now experience, at home, a less literate culture than was provided in the homes of their grandparents. Increasingly, therefore, many middle-class children are being deprived of a rich literate culture at home, making the content of the school curriculum more important for the middle class than it has been in previous decades.

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"The paradox that educational conservatism is in fact socially progressive."

"We liberals make a bad bargain if we choose pious slogans about multiculturalism over the realities of the conservatism of literacy. We thereby cede to political conservatives the only really practical policy for educational and social progress, making conservatives, willy nilly, more truly progressive than ourselves."

The decline of literacy in the American middle class accounts, of course, for a decline in communication skills in the country as a whole. Large companies complain that their younger executives, for want of abler competition, give credence to the grand old American idea that you don't need good grammar to become powerful or rich. But in the modern world, that idea has become less and less realistic. Semiliterate people who happen to be rich or powerful in today's world would be less so if they had to compete with people who could communicate well. That is exactly what has happened in the international sphere vis-a-vis Japan. Our country has become less rich and powerful as it has been forced to compete with better educated societies. Despite durable American myths to the contrary, the semiliterate but rich person is a vanishing species in the modern world, including even the USA.

So much for misconceptions about the elitism and conservatism of literate culture. Political liberals, of which I count myself one, must be alert to the paradox that educational conservatism is in fact socially progressive. Educational liberalism, by contrast, with its emphasis on relevance, diversity, and skills, has proved itself to be socially regressive. But once we understand the inherent conservatism of literacy, the paradox is explained, and the way is open to making education reform a party-blind project. All parties should embrace the truth that only educational conservatism can achieve political, social, and economic progress. We liberals make a bad bargain if we choose pious slogans about multiculturalism over the realities of the conservatism of literacy. We thereby cede to political conservatives the only really practical policy for educational and social progress, making conservatives, willy nilly, more truly progressive than ourselves. As this paradox is more widely understood, curriculum reform should become a more multi-partisan effort.

I want to spend the last minutes of this talk on some of the practical aspects of the reforms that are needed to raise national literacy. The first step of the cultural literacy project had to be the identification of the elements of literate culture that are known to insiders but not to outsiders. That is to say, our first step had to be to create a list. The aim of taking that preliminary step was, of course, to enable us to give those critical elements into the possession of those who are dispossessed. In 1987, these dispossessed comprise not just minorities but also large numbers of the middle class.

By actually making a list, my colleagues and I made the point that the difference between illiteracy and high literacy was a limited body of information. We wanted to bring that body of information out into the open and make it a subject for democratic discussion. Our feeling was that once a provisional list had been made, it could be criticized and improved upon. Moreover, once a list was created, people might find it harder to ignore the fact that every course that is taught in every school does have content of some sort that can be indexed in the form of a list. Even a course in critical thinking skills must have content, and that content can be indexed in the form of a list. In short, our first aim in making a list was to help force the question of content out into the open, instead of letting it stay hidden under the table, or allowing the pretense that specific content isn't important, because skills are the things that count.

When my book was first published, I gave a talk to some education writers in San Francisco in which I gave an example of the sort of hidden list that in fact drives American education, but which cannot easily withstand the light of day. I made a combined alphabetical list of all the authors and skill features in three popular school readers for grades 6, 11, and 12. Each of the readers was over 500 pages long, yet there was a complete absence of Shakespeare and Greek myths. One of the readers did include an author named John Keats, but he turned out to be a modern prose writer whose essay was entitled "The Best Part of Fishing." I entitled this list "What Every American Doesn't Need to Know."

What my colleagues and I tried to accomplish by publishing our list was at the very least to redirect attention to specific contents, and encourage people to ask whether it would not be more useful to our children to provide the more traditional elements that make up literate culture. We wished to direct the attention of publishers and adoption committees to the advantages of including traditional materials. That was the modest, indirect purpose of making a list. The more direct purpose was to provide specific guidelines to content.

I have mentioned that our list-making enterprise bears analogies to the work of Henry Higgins, who had systematically listed the elements of English pronunciation, grammar and social chitchat that were known to aristocrats but not known to plebs. That was the necessary first step of his program. Needless to say, the cultural literacy project is more ambitious in scope than the one that Shaw humorously distilled into English pronunciation and grammar, but, after all, the cultural literacy project is designed for a period of instruction of thirteen years rather than just a few weeks.

Since most discussions of my book have been focused on our provisional list, those who favor the cultural literacy project have said that the list is basically sound. Those who dislike the idea of cultural literacy have gleefully pointed out that the list exhibits some egregious omissions and inconsistencies in the printed list. Nonetheless, the list is basically sound in that literate people score over 90 percent on the list as a whole.

Probably the most important technical question about our list is whether it reflects with reasonable accuracy the background knowledge shared by literate Americans. We now have a preliminary answer to that question. We sent a carefully representative sampling of the list to 1100 lawyers throughout the nation, on the assumption that lawyers, by profession, are literate Americans. We avoided newspaper reporters as a source of data, because we thought they would immediately publish our confidential tests. To our surprise and gratification, the lawyers responded quickly and in large numbers. They had no incentive to cheat, because anonymity was strictly preserved.

How did they score on the sample, which consisted of 115 representative items taken from 23 categories? Even though we included in our questionnaire 25 items about science that many literate people would not be expected to answer, the lawyers averaged a score of 92 percent. Moreover, the 8 percent of items that the lawyers missed on average were not all the same items. This means that there were shortcomings in some lawyers as well in the list itself, which is just what one would expect. These data indicate that, as far as it goes, our list is perhaps 95 percent accurate as a gauge of actual American literate culture. Of course, our list is constantly being improved upon as we receive suggestions. But the evidence that has already come in shows that it is a pretty accurate list as it stands.

Some people have asked what I say to those who complain that the list has mistakenly omitted important people and places. I usually say, simply and honestly, that the suggestions are right. But notice that critics are able to make specific complaints only because their readers can be expected to recognize that the complaints are valid. Thus, every objection to the details of the list implicitly concedes the validity of the principle of shared literate culture. In fact, the most useful comments on the list have come from its critics rather than its supporters.

But other critics have voiced a rather more substantial and interesting objection to our list. They have been willing to accept the cogency of the *Pygmalion* approach to literate culture, but nonetheless prophesy that when the approach leaves the covers of my book and enters the sphere of actual practice, it will become prey to abuses that will make the cure worse than the disease. Some have expressed the fear that the net result of demystifying literate culture will be to trivialize it. The schools, it is

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said, will probably set aside special "cultural literacy hours," and they will go down the list alphabetically, giving students deadening instruction which they will instantly forget. These prophets of failure paint a picture of nitwit teachers and principals who will teach an incoherent encyclopedia, in the expectation that kids will be motivated and interested by a mindless presentation of alphabetical facts.

I don't deny that such abuses are possible with any educational idea, however soundly conceived. But those who prophesy trivialization and futility should read what I have already said in my book about putting cultural literacy into practice in the schools. The book makes clear that schools should teach a coherent intensive and extensive curriculum based on the elements of literate culture. Moreover, the book also insists that literate culture, like any other knowledge, can only be taught successfully if it is embedded in interesting, coherent, motivational materials. The book also makes a discrimination (as the prophets of trivialization do not) between early and later grades. Obviously, the methods and emphases that motivate learning vary from grade to grade as well as from student to student. Moreover, if we produce well-designed tests of general knowledge, on sounder principles than existing tests, that will tend to make the issue of trivialization and forgetfulness moot. For only a student who really knows literate culture could perform well on such tests.

These tests are now on the way. And so are dictionaries of cultural literacy that spell out the information that literate people tend to know about the items on the list. 12th-grade versions of the tests have been field tested in California and Virginia. They will be published next year by the Cultural Literacy Foundation, to which I have assigned ownership of the tests. Scholars and teachers are already at work to create a sound sequence in the earlier grades for working up to the 12th-grade material. When their suggestions are consolidated, the Foundation will be able to make further tests and dictionaries for elementary and middle grades. The advantage of these tests will be twofold. First, the information on which they are based will be known to everyone in advance, in the form of dictionaries which are arranged by subject matter. That open-door policy will give everyone a fair shot at the tests, and remove the issue of cultural bias. Secondly, the tests will leave schools entirely free to determine the most suitable approaches and emphases for teaching literate culture.

The tests are saying in effect: "We don't care how you manage to make people literate. We don't care what political or moral or ethnic slant you apply to the material. We don't care whether you spend a lot of school time or a little in conveying the information. We only want to be sure that you do convey it effectively, so that your students *will* be literate." The approach is like the one taken by the smart abbot in a story my father liked to tell. There were two monasteries quite close to each other in Italy, one run by a smart abbot and one by a dumb abbot. The olive trees of the smart abbot always flourished and bore fine harvests, but those of the dumb abbot were always scraggly and unfruitful. One year the dumb abbot could no longer contain himself and went to see his rival. "Please tell me what method you use to have such good crops. I can't understand what I've been doing wrong. When my olive trees need rain my method is to pray for rain. When they need sun my method is to pray for sun. When they need cool weather, my method is to pray for cool weather, and so on. What method do you use?" "Oh!," said the smart abbot, "my method is simple. Every night I offer up the same prayer. I say: 'Dear God, please take care of my olive trees.'"

The policy of the Cultural Literacy Foundation is not to support any one method for teaching literate culture, but rather to describe its elements in a sound grade-by-grade sequence, to create graded dictionaries that define its contents, and to offer tests for determining whether literate culture has been successfully taught. The specific methods it leaves to the wisdom, tastes, and expertise of those who teach and who supervise teaching.

Beyond that, one piece of assistance the Foundation hopes to provide is to ask a group of respected educators to examine educational materials in order to determine whether they effectively impart literate culture, or whether they trivialize the information, as some people fear. If materials are pedagogically sound (regardless of their ideological approach) such a committee of experts would recommend they be given a Foundation seal of approval. It remains to be seen whether this policy will help discourage the trivialization that has been feared.

I want to end these remarks with an observation about the chances of effective educational reform. Within the educational establishment as well as within the general public I have encountered a certain amount of defeatism, along the lines of the first Coleman Report, which was taken to say that the job can't be done by the schools alone. I have been told by specialists that people have always complained about our educational shortcomings, and that there never was a golden age of education. Things have always been bad, and probably always will be. Moreover, we must beware of turning education into indoctrination, as the cultural literacy project threatens to do. And I have heard other, similar mournful and defensive attitudes. One reviewer bluntly said that my book is just too optimistic. But my reply to all this is that education is the field par excellence for optimists. We will hardly make progress in education if we believe in advance that we can't. Most good teachers I know are optimists. It's a puzzle to me why anyone but an optimist would want to devote his or her life to education. Moreover, I think that nowadays our optimism is well-grounded, in light of what we know about literacy. In a country as rich and vigorous as ours, I see no insuperable barrier to universal literacy in our lifetime. ■

"We will hardly make progress in education if we believe in advance that we can't."

Reaction to E. D. Hirsch

William Raspberry
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Washington Post

I would like to explain something up front, that I'm something of an E. D. Hirsch fan. In his book, he says some things of rather profound significance. Whether we can get to where he is from where we are is a question I haven't resolved in my own head yet, but I would like to see us make the effort. I particularly agree with this notion that we have made some serious mistakes along the way, especially in the recent past. I think they are not uncorrectable mistakes but I do think they are mistakes. One of the mistakes is a mistake that not only school people but outsiders make. We spend a lot of time, in newspapers and elsewhere, talking about children, especially children of the inner cities, not being able to read, and those of us who are not in the schools have taken that to mean, quite literally, that they could not pronounce words, could not recognize consonants and could not sound out words, and the remedies ran the gamut from a sort of rope burning to standing in the corners reading, and they always included a return to phonics as the solution to that problem. Those of you in the schools, especially those of you in the primary grades, tell me that that kind of reading is not the problem, that the kids do learn to pronounce words in fairly routine fashion and they can sound out words later on.

I'm thinking of something that some people at the Center for Applied Linguistics used to talk about a few years ago, a lot of years ago, when I was a young columnist. They used to say that one of the reasons inner-city children had difficulty learning to read, learning that skill, was that unlike middle-class children, who had to make only a single translation from print to sound and as soon as they made that translation they were reading, inner-city children, those whose language was quite unlike the language of the text, had to make two translations: one from print to the sound that the author intended and another from the words of the author to the form that they themselves understood, to their own form of language, and these people at the Center for Applied Linguistics said that that's the reason for the great difficulties so many inner-city children have in learning to read. So they took to writing some materials in the black dialect, what we used to call "ghetto-ese" and is now called "black English." They wrote the text in that form so that as soon as the kids learned to decode they were already reading. That may have worked reasonably well at the Center for Applied Linguistics, and I've heard rumors about trying to translate that into the public school classroom, where the classes would be taught by people who are not linguists. At any rate, I think our attitude about literacy sort of expanded from there inappropriately. It might make great sense to use that approach for a beginning reader; for a person just learning to read, to go from print to the familiar makes a good deal of sense. But we have stayed with the familiar too long, I think. We have stayed with it past the simple learning-to-read phase; some kids did learn to read that way, although they seemed to learn to read the other way—they seem to learn almost any way.

But, by the time the kid has gone to third or fourth grade, where we start looking for something a little more difficult than simply pronouncing words, we find these kids showing up as poor readers. Not as poor word

callers so much, not as pronouncers, but the problem is that, while publishers talk about decoding, Hirsch talks at great length in this book about the fact that when you simply read words on paper and the words on the paper are the extent of your information about the things you are reading, you have a great deal of difficulty in answering very many questions about what you have read afterwards. What happens, without our even being aware of it, is that almost every test, written or otherwise, on information we are supposed to have read implies that we have brought other knowledge to it long before we read it, and that, I think, is the stuff of cultural literacy. We can't just fix it by moving from reading as a skill—that is word calling, decoding—into a deliberate effort to teach thinking and reasoning skills, and I'm not sure I've seen places where that has worked awfully well either.

I guess I find myself agreeing with Dr. Hirsch that along with the stuff we think about as thinking and reasoning skills there really is the habit and practice and the ability to draw on information that we have in the backs of our heads, information that comes from a variety of sources, to assimilate that information, put it together in new ways depending on what we are trying to do with it and to extrapolate from it. It looks a good deal like thinking, and I get credit for doing a lot of thinking, because I do a good deal of reading and thinking about things and assimilating and interpolating and extrapolating information that I have got from who knows what sources, but primarily from reading, and based on my personal experience as a thinker and reader, I believe that the difference between the culturally illiterate and the literate among us is, in fact, a limited body of knowledge that is catalogable and learnable. Such a view is incredibly optimistic and I hope that it's correct. If it is correct—that is, if we can put together this list of things that a literate person ought to know, that literate people know—then that is the beginning of the solution, but certainly not the end of it.

How do we impart this knowledge to people who don't have it? Somebody said to me, "If you have to do it, you ought to do it first in the universities, so that everybody who can then lay claim to a university education—including teachers, prospective teachers—will have this body of knowledge that literate people are supposed to have and then take this knowledge to the youngsters." The problem is that the list is so big to begin with, that college is much too late to start acquiring the knowledge on the list. If you buy Hirsch's idea, you have to assume that people need to acquire knowledge on the list at every stage of their education, beginning quite, quite early. Which raises the other end of the question: how do you start doing it in the primary grades if the child is apt to be taught by teachers who didn't get it either? That is a serious problem—we do have a couple of generations of people who have come through the system that we now see as flawed. It doesn't mean that a significant proportion of present-day teachers are stupid; a good many of them though, I suspect, are ignorant of much of the contents of this list and the question is, "How do you deal with that?" It seems to me that one of the things that we have to give some serious thought to doing, maybe on some of

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those staff development days, is to get teachers some help in improving their own cultural literacy. And if you can find a way to do it that is not condemnatory—you're not saying, "Look here, you stupid, culturally deprived person, here is what you missed that you should have had, now do it"—I think there are ways to do it.

I've got three kids at home who grew up not knowing as many nursery rhymes as I think an intelligent person ought to know, let alone some of the reading, some of the books I think they should either have read or at least be aware of. I myself have recently been fixing some of the holes in my own knowledge. I have been stealing my children's reading lists, seeing titles that I know very well I should have read—I mean some things that are children's classics and I knew the names—so I can deal with the items on Dr. Hirsch's list, as things to be familiar with but not necessarily steeped in. I know that I should have read much of what I haven't read—I found myself last summer reading *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson* for the first time. I knew I should have read it long ago but I didn't, but I had still been able to work it into a conversation, so you weren't apt to know that I hadn't read it. It's sort of the counterpart of "If your time is limited, spend a lot of your Sunday afternoons reading book reviews. You would be amazed how many books you don't actually have to read."

You are going to hear in just a second from Sol Lausch who will be the educator in this act. So I think my job is to warm you up and sort of set the stage for him. I will tell you again, I do buy the idea that there are things that people know, things they talk about, ways of talking about things, analysis—an educated person ought to be able to talk about and make sense of a phrase like, "a pound of flesh" or "sour grapes" or "Eliza Dolittle," and it does strike me as correct that an equally good book, that is a book of equal literary content may not help provide cultural literacy if it is not widely shared by educated people across the country. We ought to know those things that intelligent, literate people know.

I am not quite so sure that it is as simple as introducing people to the list; I think Dr. Hirsch does not address the core idea of the revisions. The Eliza Dolittle model is, in my experience, the problem. Eliza Dolittle was a willing pupil of Prof. Henry Higgins—she wanted a transformation as much as he desired it. Teachers, especially in the inner cities (whether in Southeast Washington or in East London) are not dealing quite so much with people who recognize the social deficit implicit in a Cockney accent and are therefore eager to embrace those who will help them be rid of it, or at least to have an alternative to it. Rather, we are often dealing with people who absolutely resist having that whole Cockney or black English language taken away from them, and even when we tell them we were giving them a second language to go along with that first one—there is still resistance. We can talk about the resistance in a number of ways. We can talk about it as does a recent report about some of the black children of certain inner-city schools putting down academic achievement as white, and therefore, something they won't pursue. Yet we are seeing it in a number of other ways—any child growing up in the

East of London today who wants to speak standard English can learn to do it without formal instruction. It's a matter of listening to the television, listening to the BBC. Everyone in London can learn standard English in spite of varying education and all of that.

In spite of this, you'll find these youngsters begging to retain their Cockney. Why? My own guess is that they know that their language involves a good deal more than just language, that the language is a proxy for their social status, for the conditions in which they live, who their parents are, the whole thing, and they worry about abandoning that whole base. They worry also about being caught trying to grow out of it and not quite succeeding. They worry about it the same way that a plain-looking woman may decide not to try to fix herself up, worrying that she might not quite succeed. Some people find it a little more comfortable to say, "I might be able to do something about my hair and my eyes—and people might say 'she's getting to be quite an attractive woman.' But, on the other hand, people may shake their heads and say—'It doesn't work.'" By the same token, children in the East of London and in the Southeast of Washington, D.C. are saying "I'm afraid to make the attempt to learn that other way of doing things, that other way of communicating," lest they come off with their peers as trying to be better than they are and come off with those they are mimicking as being sort of cheap imitations of the real thing, sort of a laughable effort at being educated, articulate, literate. That problem would take a lot more than a list or catalog of knowledge to tackle, but the idea that some progress can be made on this inner-city problem intrigues me.

But suppose Dr. Hirsch is wrong. After we go ahead and make the effort he recommends, I expect that a good deal of positive value will have happened anyway. We have to teach kids some content anyway, so why not the knowledge that Hirsch recommends? But what if he is right? We may, for the first time, see the beginning of a way to break out of a bad situation we've been in for virtually a generation now. I'd like to see us give it a shot. ■

"We ought to know those things that intelligent, literate people know."

Reaction to E. D. Hirsch

Solomon Lausch, Principal
City College High School
Baltimore (Md.) Public Schools

I would like first to address Dr. Spillane. I appreciate your agenda citing what schools cannot do. I have read some of your ideas on these matters before and am impressed with your forthrightness.

I also appreciate your quotation from Albert Einstein about confusion of means and ends. Einstein is not alone in these views; witness Barbara Tuchman in her book *The March of Folly*:

> The citizens of Troy accepting into their gates the wooden horse, which contained "the Greeks bearing gifts."
>
> The obtuseness and depravity of the Renaissance popes, which provoked the Protestant Secession in the 15th Century.
>
> The British loss of America and the United States' experience in Vietnam, both characterized by what Tuchman calls "wooden headedness," or callous, unflagging commitment to wrong principles.

Confusion of ends is not alone to our age, therefore, but it certainly speaks to the central purpose of this conference. In education we have been in the pose, actively, I think, in the past 30 years of making the means of education our end. Secretary of Education William Bennett and others, whether we like or dislike them as bedfellows, and now Prof. Hirsch, are challenging us persuasively to look to our ends.

Before I respond directly to Prof. Hirsch and the premises of *Cultural Literacy*, let me list what I perceive as the factors which contribute to school achievement in our or any other industrial culture (I here include Japan and Korea):

1. **Innate ability** - There are biological differences which relate to achievement—not across races, as the pseudo arguments of the Shockleys of this world go, but within the human family.

2. **Subcultural values** - Values within subcultures in a given society serve to differentiate the subculture, including school achievement. Consider, for instance, the recent, compelling articles in *The Sun* (Baltimore) by Kathy Lally. She wrote about high school students, likely candidates for dropping out of school, at least in part because of low motivation, who lived in low income housing, who nonetheless most valued their several pairs of Adidas shoes and $50 jeans. She also wrote about the senior class president, having a baby during the year and attending the senior prom, and then taking part in a three day weekend fling to King's Dominion, the baby being left in the care of an aunt.

3. **N Ach factor** - The Need Achievement (N Ach) factor is used by some sociologists to measure the drive for success across and within cultures. The need to achieve is notably high in the world within the Jewish culture, among the Southeast Asian boat people settled here in the United States, and among the Japanese and some other Asian cultures.

4. **Time on Task** - Research has well established that learning in school is closely correlated with the amount of time allocated for instruction and the amount of time actually spent in instruction.

5. **Nature of the curriculum** - The content of the curriculum and the level and breadth of the demand made upon the learner is the fifth factor which relates to the degree of achievement in school. And it is around this factor that Professor Hirsch is most compelling. He is compelling on two points.

First, he argues the need for a citizenry fully literate in the national culture. He makes the case for the absolute necessity to master the national culture to become literate, thereby being able to receive and send communications that others in the culture will understand and doing so at a level and degree of sophistication that is competitive in the world.

Integration of the national culture within and across all segments of our society will, in effect, be the saving grace of the nation. Nowhere is it indelibly written, after all, that the 21st century shall be the Age of Asia, as some now pretend.

Second, Hirsch is persuasive that teaching to a consciously selected, traditionally founded curriculum is the most effective way to achieve this end, cultural literacy, in the nation. The end here is also the means. The evidence he presents is convincing. Note his clearly drawn illustrations about the difference in comprehension test scores between university and junior college students. They scored virtually the same on a passage dealing with human relationships, but scored significantly differently on questions centering on a passage about the Surrender at Appomatox.

In the preface to *Cultural Literacy*, Hirsch writes, "Cultural literacy constitutes the only sure avenue of opportunity for disadvantaged children, the only reliable way of combating the social determinism that now condemns them to remain in the same social and educational condition as their parents." Hirsch is quite right, for we cannot address biological differences in intellect, which exist, of course, in every culture; we cannot change the parental/cultural milieu of poverty and indifference which results in wrong choice after wrong choice.

We can attempt to intervene in the subculture and, through thoughtful and rigorous instruction, open the learners to new concepts and values. We can endeavor also to raise the need-to-achieve factor, and we can improve the ratios of time allocated for instruction and the time actually spent in instruction and learning.

Like it or not, English is the standard, codified language of America. Standing aside from it, being incapable of literate proficiency, only dooms one to second-class participation in America. There is no alternative. The arguments behind bilingualism are bogus, for we would try to make persons proficient in two languages and cultures who are woefully improficient in one. As Hirsch states, "Linguistic pluralism would make sense for us only on the questionable assumption that our civil peace and effectiveness could survive multilingualism."

*"In education we have been in the pose, **actively**, I think, in the past 30 years of making the means of education our end."*

That large numbers of high-school-age young people do not know the dates of the Civil War or of World War II or cannot identify Winston Churchill or the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is alarming."

"Hirsch is exactly on the mark when he argues that the elements which make for cultural literacy must be in place before the high school years."

Asian Americans are notable exceptions to the argument because they compensate with high N Ach factors and they have before them the examples of the Japanese, Koreans, Taiwanese, and Singaporese. Hispanic Americans and Native Americans have low N Ach factors and are not inheritors of a literate alternative.

One other exception, the Amish and plain Mennonites, are bilingual in our society. But again, they have a high N Ach factor and are part of a narrow, coherent subculture with a set of values peculiar to their group.

The need to bring about cultural literacy is current across all socio-economic strata in contemporary America; it is true for all students, not simply those in the large cities and/or segments of our black and Native American and Hispanic citizens that stand out. The decline on the SAT scores since 1964 and only now leveling out and the egregious ignorance of history found in research cited by Hirsch should be a clarion call to action for all of us. That large numbers of high-school-age young people do not know the dates of the Civil War or of World War II or cannot identify Winston Churchill or the Voting Act of 1965 is alarming.

Hirsch is exactly on the mark when he argues that the elements which make for cultural literacy must be in place before the high school years. He states, "The weight of human tradition across many cultures supports the view that basic acculturation should largely be completed by age thirteen."

There is strong consensus in the literature that even starting at grade five, that is age nine or ten, is too late. By this point the effort is simply catch-up, and never sufficient.

In grades K-3 in the United States, students from different backgrounds can compete with each other well on standardized tests. Then the big drop-off starts. Again, quoting Hirsch, "T. Travasso and his colleagues discovered that differences in reading ability between five year olds and eight year olds are caused primarily by the older children's possessing more knowledge, not by differences in their memory capacities, reasoning abilities, or control of eye movements."

The point is, we need to put a concerted curriculum in place, grades K-8, which inculcates literacy. The continuing question, obviously, is can or will reform take place?

Like you, I'm out there in the building "doing it" every day. My value at this conference is that I am a practitioner. I hold a Ph.D., but frankly, that does not mean didly in the practical day-to-day demands of my job. Too often, in fact most of the time, my day consists of getting substitute coverage, providing supervision in the cafeteria, tracking down marijuana smells, and responding to conflicting, after-the-fact, often ill-advised directives from the central office, directives couched as requests, and requirements for reports from "central office support" staff.

I have seen programs come and go like bubbles in the wind. They float on in and float on out, doomed by their vacuity.

There is a billion dollar industry in the U.S. consisting of educational consultants, here locally the "beltway bandits," only a handful of whom have ever done any meaningful, original, publishable research. First, there are those who have never been classroom teachers or school-based administrators, but who sure as hell know what ought to be done: "Expect more, set higher standards, you incompetent persons." That's their message. Most "consultants" are in this group.

Second, are those who have been principals or superintendents but who no longer are, but who go around the country at conferences telling those of us who still are all the wonderful things we should be doing. The question is, why in the name of sense weren't they doing these things when they were in our shoes? You know they were not because they never have any illustration or proof for you, because it's not there.

So, shall we give up? There's no hope? Of course not. I'm not built that way and neither are you. I have this modest suggestion, if I may, for you Dr. Spillane and for Dr. McKenzie.

Take one of your best elementary principals and one of your best middle school principals. Let them each select three teachers. Pull them aside for a year with temporary replacements, but with the guarantee that they will return at the end of the year for at least three years after.

Assign these eight people to design and write curriculum, under guidelines your boards and you clearly set. Charge them to have it ready by May. Pay for staff development (employment and training) for six weeks, June 11- July 31. Put the curriculum in place K-5, 6-8, and begin evaluating results yearly, looking for clear signs of improvement. I believe you will find it and then you can begin implementing systemwide.

Always, the key to success for such a program is to have the principal and the (three) faculty members as the trainers, the implementers—no one else. If there is one truism in education it is that a program will succeed only to the degree that the principal and the faculty perceive that they have ownership.

I have a final concern. Prof. Hirsch does not address accomplishment in areas other than the spoken/written word. In the book, he refers only twice, and that in passing, to skill in numeracy—the ability to compute, and to manipulate mathematical symbols.

The literature is strong that there is a significant correlation between level of literacy (i.e., reading) and level of achievement in mathematics. Whether using intelligence tests, some other norm-referenced tests (such as the California Achievement Test), or criterion-referenced tests (such as basic skills test or the SAT), there is a strong correlation between verbal and mathematical performance—by no means complete, but significant. I would like Professor Hirsch, therefore, to address mathematical "literacy" in some way. It is part of the fabric of cultural literacy. His colleague, Professor James Trefil, addresses a related concern, in arguing for the inclusion of certain scientific and technical language in "The List."

I shall end my remarks with a quote from *Julius Caesar*, a quotation Dr. Hirsch's father would use from time to time in his business transactions. Its appropriateness speaks to our concern for action today:

> There is a tide in the affairs of men
> Which taken at the flood leads on to fortune
> Omitted, all the voyage of their life
> Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
> On such a full sea are we now afloat
> And we must take the current when it serves,
> Or lose our ventures. ■

"If there is one truism in education it is that a program will succeed only to the degree that the principal and the faculty perceive that they have ownership."

Report of Discussion

"The Mission of the Schools" Conference

ARTHUR BESTOR, 1955
E. D. HIRSCH, 1987

Discussion Session on August 4

At this point in the conference, participants had heard Robert R. Spillane's keynote speech and E.D. Hirsch's comments on "cultural literacy," as well as reactions to these comments by William Raspberry and Solomon Lausch. They had also been exposed to a quote by Arthur Bestor which formed the point of departure for the conference (see p. 5). In small groups, they discussed what they had heard so far.

Bestor's call for "sound training in the fundamental ways of thinking" prompted some participants to say that, in recent years, schools have taken on many nonacademic tasks and that this had made it difficult for schools to continue to teach as much of the academic disciplines and also that schools may have overemphasized "process" at the expense of "content." Other participants noted that some "nonacademic" functions which schools have taken on (e.g., drug education) may be necessary in order to permit academic learning and that such functions are, in any case, demanded by the larger society. One participant said: "It's not just schools - it's society which needs to address the issue" of what the schools should and should not be responsible for. One participant summed up the discussion of the Bestor quote by saying "The school system should stop being all things to all people. Schools should identify what they do well and stick to those things."

E.D. Hirsch's call for "cultural literacy" led one participant to say, "Hirsch is dead right," but other participants were concerned that Hirsch's recommendations would lead to a "trivial-pursuit approach." One noted that "we have been too concerned with self-concept; however, if we help students achieve, their self-concepts will improve," and another said that "there's a lot of support from parents for a basic curriculum, which would support Hirsch." A number of participants noted that "the process of thinking must be taught" along with the information which constitutes cultural literacy, but one participant noted that "Hirsch is not saying it's a cure-all." Some participants were concerned about the Western, Judeo-Christian, English-language biases of cultural literacy, but others said things like "we need to understand other cultures in the present world, but, to do that, first we need to know our own culture."

When participants considered whether schools should do both what Bestor calls for and what Hirsch calls for, many agreed that schools "*must* do both" and that Bestor's "sound training in the fundamental ways of thinking" and Hirsch's "cultural literacy" are inseparable. One participant articulated this view by pointing out that "the concepts integrate—Bestor's is the broad concept and Hirsch's 'list' is the framework." While some participants said things like "we have to—we are" and "we do much of what Hirsch calls for anyway," others said "yes, but it will be difficult" and cited lack of room in the curriculum and support from the larger community as barriers to a stronger academic education for all students. A number of participants cited pressures from the larger society, noting that television often had more effect on children than schools and saying that "the United States needs to value education more." At the same time, there seemed to be a consensus that we need to "limit the scope of the schools" and extend academic education "to all students." ■

Ensuring That Schools Achieve Their Mission: A National Perspective

Senator Paul Simon (D-Illinois)

Let me talk and reflect just a little bit on your theme "Mission of the Schools." First, it is obvious that there has to be a basic core of knowledge, and we must recognize that we are not providing that core curriculum to many students adequately. Let me just mention two areas. When you graduate from secondary school in the Soviet Union, Japan, or West Germany (and when I mention these countries I don't do that in a negative sense, but to recognize that we are in a competitive world); when you graduate from a secondary school in one of those countries you have four years of physics; 16% of those who graduate from high school in the United States have at least one year of physics. One of the most astounding statistics I know is that we have more school districts in the United States than we have physics teachers in the United States. Let me move to another area. We are the only nation on the face of the earth where you can go through grade school, high school, college, get a Ph.D. and never have a year of a foreign language. We have the only foreign service in the world where you can get into the foreign service without the knowledge of a foreign language. You wonder why we sometimes get into difficulties in other countries. You don't need to dig deeply to discover why. I had lunch with Secretary of State George Schultz a few weeks ago and talked about this very thing, urging that we make a requirement of foreign language study for those entering the foreign service. The answer from the State Department is, basically, that you cannot expect the State Department to do something that our culture has not done.

Provincialism. I remember when the hostages were taken at Tehran, and all of a sudden I was reading about Shiite Moslems and Sunni Moslems, and I realized that my education and my culture had prepared me with a knowledge of the various divisions of Christianity and Judaism but that what I knew about the Moslem world, what I knew about the beliefs of most of the world was very, very limited. The basic core of knowledge ought to include exposure to the rest of the world through language, through geography, and through other things. I'm reminded of H. L. Mencken, the old *Baltimore Sun* columnist who used to give us the needle periodically. In describing our linguistic and cultural provincialism he wrote, "If English was good enough for Jesus Christ it's good enough for me."

Let me move to the tools that you use and then get back to the fundamentals again. One of the basic tools is obviously that of the teacher. This is a gathering primarily of school administrators. The administrators have been largely teachers, I will assume. (applause) Let me ask this group how many of you here want your children to become teachers? More hands raised than I expected, more hands raised than usual, more hands raised than I would get in an audience of teachers, I would add. It still means that very roughly 4/5 of the audience, or a little higher, does not want its children to become teachers. In Japan, teachers are paid about the same as lawyers, engineers, and doctors. Teachers are in the top 10% in income. In the United States, teachers are above the average, not significantly above the average but you get a good salary. Let's look at the question another way: take the top 5% of the high school seniors

in whatever school you are an administrator of. If you are in an elementary school, talk to your friends in a high school. Ask that 5% what they want to become. You will find very, very few who want to become teachers. That is not good news for the nation.

"Somehow the best and brightest among us ought to be moving into the field of teaching."

Somehow the best and brightest among us ought to be moving into the field of teaching. I remember back some two years ago; you know, you get these speaking invitations and they are 9 months off, and you say, "Oh sure, I can do that," and then all of a sudden it's 3 or 4 days before you are supposed to speak, and you say: "Why did I accept that invitation?" I was asked to speak by a friend who is on the board of directors of the Illinois College of Podiatry at their Commencement. He was a long-time friend, and it was 9 months off, and I said: "Fine, I will speak at your graduation." All of a sudden, three or four days before the commencement I started to think about it, and I realized I had never been to a podiatrist in my life, I didn't know anything about podiatry, and I started reading about it. One of the interesting things I discovered is that in the state of Illinois (and my guess that the same would hold true in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia) we are much more rigid in our requirements about the people who take care of our feet then we are about the people who take care of our children. What are our priorities as a nation? Using quality teachers as a key tool to convey that basic knowledge is absolutely essential.

"What are our priorities as a nation? Using quality teachers as a key tool to convey that basic knowledge is absolutely essential."

Parents are also a key tool in this process. Twenty-three million functionally illiterate adult Americans, people who can't read a stop sign, can't address an envelope, can't fill out an employment form, and (what is more important for this group) can't help their children with school work. I accidentally came across this problem when I was a member of the House. We had these open office hours during which people came in just one at a time with whatever their problems were, and many people had me check into their records—whether it be social security, or black lung, or whatever the problem may be. They had a consent form to sign-I can't disclose someone's records without that person's consent. Every once in a while, when I would say, "Can you sign a consent form?" someone would say, "Is it OK if my wife or husband signs?" and then, once in a while, I would see people very carefully draw their names, and I knew it was the only thing they could write. We know how to solve this problem and this is one of those things that can pay off quickly. We are finding out from people who have either signed up for welfare or for unemployment compensation or whatever. Whatever the means, we have to move on it and we are not moving on it. Oh, I have been able to get 5 million dollars for the Library Services and Construction Act for literacy programs, and I got 2 million dollars for a literacy program through VISTA, and I got a little college work-study money. But if, through my efforts, I have been able to attack 1% of the fight for literacy, that is probably a high figure. We have basically ignored adult illiteracy; that is a drag on our society; economically, educationally, and in every other way.

But it is not only the actual illiteracy that I think you are concerned about, it is the intellectual illiteracy. And here, if I may be candid, I find that frequently once a person gets that certificate, whether it is a high school diploma or a B.A. or a Ph.D., that certificate becomes the intellectual death certificate. There is no longer growth. I remember reading Emerson's line one time, "Read one book a month and in ten years you will be an educated person." I'm not at all sure that is true but I am sure that if you stop growing, if you stop learning, whether you are a teacher or a school administrator, or whatever your particular function in society is, if you stop growing, something happens. It is not good for you, or for those around you, including your immediate family or your general contacts. Anyway, growing intellectually has to be part of this. And then, finally, it seems to me, we have to make a much bigger national priority out of this little field of education. And if we do, then we are going to pay more attention to what we want, whether we want it, where we are

going. A society where people pay more attention to who the third baseman is for the Baltimore Orioles than who the third grade teacher is for their children is a society that has its values askew. And the reality is that, to a great extent, that is where we are.

A nation can make good investments just as an individual can; if Bud Spillane buys stock in the New York stock market, he can find out tomorrow, or next week, or next month exactly how he is doing. Unfortunately, it is not that easy to find out how you are doing in the short term as you spend dollars on education, whether it is at the federal level or at the school-district level, the state level, or whatever it may be. But I think it is fairly clear we have made too many investments that don't pay off. Japan has moved ahead of us in many ways, and it is clear that they will be moving rapidly forward while we as a nation are slowing. Just a few weeks ago, a small item appeared on the back pages of the newspapers: the average worker in Japan is now making more money than the average worker in the United States. In 1950, the average worker in Japan made 5% as much as did the average worker in the United States. How does Japan do it? Well, Japan did it, among other ways, by investing in her human resources; we are going to have to do more of the same. We know some interesting things about such investments. For example, based on some tests in Ypsilanti, Michigan, given by New York University, we know that an intensified preschool education program pays off dramatically in changes in drop-out rates, teen-age pregnancies, crime rates, etc. We know it; this is not theory. We have the knowledge, but we are not applying it. We are spending money. Not too many miles from where we are meeting, we are probably very soon going to authorize two new nuclear carrier flotillas (not with my vote, but we are going to authorize it anyway) each of which, by the time you get the whole thing together, will cost approximately $18 billion. The total budget for the Department of Education is $19.5 billion. We already have 14 carriers to the Soviets' one, and in a sense what they represent is what we do as a nation. Just the other day we found out that while we are building nuclear carriers we only have three mine sweepers; they are located in South Carolina, and the difficulty is that no admiral wants to be in charge of the mine sweepers. And so, when the admirals make recommendations, it is not for mine sweepers, it is for nuclear carriers, and somehow we move along, and in this strange way that things go together the people who make the carriers in Virginia and the people who make the engines in Connecticut and the labor unions involved and all the others, all of a sudden there is this massive effort saying: "We better build these two new carrier flotillas, and we move along, and we make that investment, and we don't do anything about preschool education: we just simply do not set the right priorities.

You have to help us change that. We are a nation rich in ethnic groups, all the ethnic groups that have enriched our nation with their folklore, ethnic groups to whom we have not paid as much attention as we should in a great variety of ways, including the native Americans. There is the story about the young Indian who was going to challenge the leadership of his tribe and he told his friend how he was going to do it. He said, "I'm going to come to the chief on the day of the great tribal council and I'm going to have a bird in my hand and I'm going to say to the chief, 'Chief, what do I have in my hand?' and he will see the feather sticking out and say, 'A bird of course,' and then I'm going to ask him whether the bird is dead or alive. If he says the bird is dead, I'll open my hand, the bird will fly away, and I'll be the new chief. If he says the bird is alive, I'll crush the bird with my hand and I'll be the new chief." The day came for the great tribal council and the young Indian came up to the chief just as he had told his friend, and he said: "What do I have in my hand, oh chief?" and the chief saw the feathers sticking out just as the young Indian had anticipated, and the chief said, "a bird." Then the young Indian asked, "Is the bird dead or alive?" There was silence in the tribal council, and the chief said, "The answer is in your hands."

"A society where people pay more attention to who the third baseman is for the Baltimore Orioles than who the third grade teacher is for their children is a society that has its values askew."

"If anyone here believes we can pay even the same amount of attention to education in the future as we have in the past and have this country remain on the competitive cutting edge with other countries at the beginning of the next century, you are living in a dream world."

If you were to ask me whether we are going to shift the priorities in this nation so that we pay more attention to education, so that we can grow as we have in the past, I would respond that the answer is in your hands, the hands of educators. If anyone here believes we can pay even the same amount of attention to education in the future as we have in the past and have this country remain on the competitive cutting edge with other countries at the beginning of the next century, you are living in a dream world. Educators are going to have to speak up. It is not enough to do a good job in whatever school you are assigned to. You are going to have to stand up for the cause. You are going to have to speak up, and you are going to have to do one other thing, and that is to dream. One of the great disservices of this adminstration, with all due respect to my friends from the Education Department here, one of the great disservices of this administration is that they have us fighting for the status quo. I'm on the Senate Budget Committee, and the Administration comes in and says, "let's cut education 28%." I fight to hold on to the 28%, and I think I have achieved a great victory while I hold onto the 28%. Do you know what I have really done? Just stood still. We cannot stand still as a nation. We have to dream once again about the kind of nation, the kind of world we can build, and I want you to be among the dreamers.

Thank you very much. ■

Ensuring That Schools Achieve Their Mission: A State Perspective

John Murphy
Assistant Commissioner
New York State Education Department

I am very pleased to share the podium this morning with Senator Simon and to speak to you about something that means so much to all of us: ensuring that our schools achieve the mission of providing our children with the best education possible. I want to thank Bud Spillane for inviting me and giving me the opportunity to represent the perspective of a state education department on the mission of the schools. I feel strongly that the state's role in achieving the mission of the schools is crucial. In my state, New York, my overall experience with education and my specific experience in the State Education Department have demonstrated to me that the crucial role of the state is being taken very seriously. I would like to explain what I see as the role of states in general by making specific reference to events in New York.

I said a moment ago that the role of the states in helping schools achieve their mission is crucial. There are three reasons why I think this. The first is constitutional. In the United States education is a state function, not a national one. Within the states, local school districts exercise considerable control over education, and at the state level that local control is respected. But members of local boards of education are also state officials who share the state's responsibility of seeing that children receive an adequate education. The fact that within the states the responsibility for education is shared by an arm of state government as well as by local boards of education occasionally results in a kind of tension between the two levels. I see this tension as largely creative, and I hope to illustrate its benefits as I proceed.

The second reason why I believe the state's role in achieving the mission of the schools is crucial is a practical reason. Within the state, there are a number of groups or organizations that have some responsibility and concern for education, but only one organization that is in a position to exercise that responsibility for the state as a whole, unfettered by local bias. Some of the groups involved in education within the state are teachers' unions, principal and school board associations, and the state legislature. Though these are all state-level groups, they all have specific constituencies; none of them represents the state as a whole. In New York State, only the State Education Department is in a position to exercise responsibility for education for all of the state reasonably free of the influence of particular interests or locales.

Nationwide, many of the recent educational initiatives and reform movements within the states have come from governors' offices. Perhaps that is because in those states it is the governor who is in a position to represent the whole state. In New York State, it is not the governor who has the primary responsibility to see to the educational interests of the state overall. Instead, in New York the Board of Regents, and through the Regents the State Education Department, carries that responsibility. In New York State, then, the State Education Department enjoys the unique position and responsibility of representing the educational interests of the whole state.

My third reason for suggesting that the state-level role is crucial in achieving the mission of the schools is based on experience. In New York State

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I have seen the State Education Department carry out its responsibility for education—and that responsibility is ongoing—and I have also seen the Department initiate substantial educational reform. It is these functions of the State Education Department which I would like to discuss further, for whether anything follows from the state's constitutional responsibility for education and its unique position for carrying out that responsibility depends upon the way in which and the success with which the State Education Department exercises these functions.

Next, I would like to discuss the major functions of the State Education Department and how it carries out these functions.

To generalize, I would say that the state's two major functions in education are a product function and a process function. The state's product function in education is to ensure that the schools have a mission. This means communicating the goals of education—what a good education means and comprises—so that all of the schools are aware of those goals and can direct their efforts toward their achievement. As Arthur Bestor has indicated, the goal of a high-quality education should provide the framework for everything that is accomplished in the name of education. John Goodlad, in *A Place Called School*, has suggested that: ". . . The State should hold the district accountable for communicating the State's goals for education in schools, developing balanced curricula in each school, employing qualified teachers, providing time and resource for school improvement, and assuring equity in the distribution of those resources." In New York we agree with Dr. Goodlad.

Let me illustrate some of the ways that the State Education Department carries out what I have called its product function. In 1984 the New York State Board of Regents approved an Action Plan which set a number of standards for elementary and secondary schools. We think they are rigorous standards. They include general educational goals, grade-level expectations, and course requirements leading to high school graduation. The development of that Action Plan took many months of effort by many people involved in an elaborate deliberative process, including meetings held in every region of the state. At these meetings, the Regents and members of the State Education Department met with representatives of school boards, administrators, teachers, and other groups interested in education. The information and perspectives collected through these meetings were considered in detail and at length by the Regents and Department staff members before the Action Plan was finally approved. The goals contained in that Plan represent a reasonable consensus; they also illustrate some of the benefits of that creative tension I mentioned earlier.

We did not stop with general goals. Since the approval of the Action Plan, the State Education Department has been revising its various syllabi for every grade and for every subject across grades kindergarten through twelve. These syllabi translate the general goals of the Action Plan into recommendations intended to provide guidance to the schools which helps them ensure that their students receive a high-quality education. The process of syllabus revision is, of course, complicated. It is not a calm process, since it involves the exchange of points of view that can be very disparate. For example, in the revision of the social studies syllabus questions arise concerning the merits of a classical historical-chronological approach versus a thematic approach, along with discussion over the appropriate relative emphasis of Western, Judaeo-Christian perspectives versus the inclusion of perspectives representing third-world cultures and ideas. The process always involves debate, and that debate most appropriately occurs at the state level. It is, however, in this syllabus review process and the subsequent adoption of those syllabi by school districts, that real reform will come about. It will come about if those syllabi are translated into local programs and implemented in classrooms.

Through syllabi, states can most directly affect the mission of schools. Consider, for example, the following characteristics of syllabi developed in New York:

1. In elementary science, we have made a shift from merely exposing students to scientific information to a syllabus which stresses that pupils should learn to think like scientists through experiential, hands-on learning, and through the development of positive attitudes toward science.
2. Our elementary math focus has been shifted to problem solving as the appropriate content for the acquisition and application of arithmetic concepts and skills. Our high school math program has shifted away from the traditional fragmented approach (algebra-geometry-algebra-trigonometry) to an integrated approach that has been common to all Western industrialized countries except the United States.
3. Our new English syllabus stresses learning holistically, not in isolated, artificial fragments. Reading and writing should not only occur during English class, but across all disciplines. A great emphasis is placed on writing.
4. We have a requirement that all students must complete two years of a foreign language by the end of grade 9, but our approach to foreign language instruction is the communicative approach; that is, students take a foreign language to learn how to communicate in it. Grammar and syntax are important, but toward the end of communication, not taught as fragmented ends in themselves.
5. Finally, in all of our syllabi we stress the integration of instruction in the civic values. We emphasize the teaching of skills such as reasoning, problem solving and inquiry processes, so that students are able to discuss and debate the application of civic values to specific situations.

Our product function also includes a concern over the effects of the schools' implementation of the syllabi. We are interested in our children attaining certain minimum standards of academic achievement. To that end, we have a number of required State tests in New York. We have competency tests at the elementary-school level in reading, writing, and math and have most recently been developing program evaluation tests for elementary social studies and science. The improvements we desire in these subjects are reflected in the competency and program evaluation tests, results of which are made public at least once a year for all schools. These results are examined by the State Education Department to determine whether schools need additional support in attaining desired standards.

In addition, our Regents examination program, a series of academic tests at the high school level in all major content areas, provides the following useful functions:

1. They provide schools a basis for evaluating the quality of instruction and learning that have taken place.
2. They are used by school personnel to identify major learning goals, offering both teachers and students a guide to important understandings, skills, and concepts.
3. They also provide pupils, parents, counselors, administrators, college admissions officers, and employees with objective and easily understood achievement information for use in making sound educational and vocational decisions.

All state tests are based on Regents goals and State syllabi, bringing them in alignment with the instruction that should be taking place in schools. The development of state goals and state syllabi and the existence of a comprehensive state testing program are collectively very powerful influences on the mission of the schools.

"The process of syllabus revision is, of course, complicated. It is not a calm process, since it involves the exchange of points of view that can be very disparate."

The subject of the role of the State Education Department in helping to identify and support schools' needs brings me to the state's process function in education. The Department is continuously receiving and digesting information that directly affects the mission of the schools. This process is a necessary precondition for achieving the mission of the schools. If the Department ignored or suspended this process function, the mission of the schools would soon become little more than a vain phrase.

"Fiscal inequity and educational inequity go hand in hand."

I have a few illustrations of this process function. Research gathered by the State Education Department has shown a direct relationship between educational achievement and resources devoted to education. This means that our state's poorest performing schools have, for example, the smallest amount of money to spend per pupil, the poorest trained teachers, and the largest classes. Fiscal inequity and educational inequity go hand in hand. But in New York we expect all students to meet at least our minimum standards and requirements. To ensure that this goal is met, we have developed State financial aid formulas to see that State aid is distributed to school districts in inverse proportion to their wealth; the most disadvantaged districts receive proportionately more state aid. Development of the state aid formulas is a careful process which takes into consideration districts' educational resources as well as levels of poverty. This function is consistent with Goodlad's view of the role of states in education.

My final examples of the state's process function are our work in early childhood education and in drop-out prevention. Our early childhood education program involves economically and educationally at-risk three- and four-year-olds; we intend to provide them with developmentally enriching experiences as a strong foundation for their subsequent educational growth. After two decades of work and study by the Department, and a good deal of interaction with parents' groups, we have seen participation in the last few years increase by nearly one-half and funding more than double, up to this year's 27 million dollars. In New York we have taken a leadership role nationally in early childhood education. Pupils from economically disadvantaged homes come to school two or more years behind their classmates. Early childhood education is an essential prerequisite to their meeting the academic standards set by the State.

"Early childhood education is an essential prerequisite to their meeting the academic standards."

Drop-out prevention is another one of our priorities. The evidence of our seriousness is the ongoing statewide debate—part of our process function—to identify and experiment with many programs designed to address this problem. The purpose of this debate is to discover what works to prevent students from dropping out of school and to recommend funding mechanisms to support programs that work. Again, if school programs are not organized in such a way as to keep pupils in schools, the mission of the schools and the academic standards agreed upon will be meaningless for a quarter of our schools' population.

My examples of the state's process function would proliferate if my time were longer. Let me conclude now by reiterating that in New York, through our product and process functions, we take our responsibility for supporting the mission of the schools very seriously. Both functions are essential, though we must always retain our focus on providing the best possible education for each student. ■

Supporting the Mission of the Schools in the Schools of the Future

Marvin Cetron, President
Forecasting International, Inc.

I am not an educator—although my organization did write a book on the school of the future—yet I come to the education area honestly—my wife has been teaching in the Fairfax system for about 20 years. You are not going to like hearing about the problems or solutions that I will suggest here. However, if you don't like the message, please don't kill the messenger.

I was on Bud Spillane's Blue Ribbon Commission for Strengthening the Teaching Profession which recommended higher salaries. Yes, I was for increases for teacher salaries—not for policemen, not for fire departments, not for librarians, not for food service personnel—no one else. The reason is that the most important thing in the education system is our children. Everybody looks out for themselves and nobody is looking out for the kids. We need good teachers to educate our children. Most of our good teachers were promoted to principals and other administrators, and what is left, in many cases, is teachers who can't teach. Everybody has been promoted to the lowest level of incompetence. We need more money for teachers' salaries. In the United States, we use the Dow Jones average as our basic building block for economics. It means nothing. It's a figment of someone's imagination. Three quarters of the numbers used are from industries which are dead: steel, textiles, rubber, railroads. Who cares? The bulk of our industry is in information, in businesses started by new entrepreneurs which are not even measured by the stock market. The basic indicator to measure one's success in this country is money. The lowest paid college-trained professional is the teacher, the second is the nurse, the third is the laboratory technician, and the fourth is the librarian. Why? Because 75 percent of these professionals are females, and females are not paid as much as males. That, coupled with the fact that in 40 of our 50 states, the starting garbage collector receives more pay than the starting teacher, means we've got a problem. In addition to this, college graduates entering the military have SAT scores 20 points higher than those who go into teaching. Our cannon fodder is worth more than our teachers. Obviously, we have a problem. We are ranked 17th out of 20 industrialized countries in education. Third from the bottom as reported to the National Committee on Excellence in Education, which wrote "A Nation at Risk." The reason: we don't care about our kids. We've got a scarce resource called energy—we work on it. We've got a scarce resource called fresh, potable drinking water—and we are also working on that. The scarcest resource is our kids, and nobody cares. The classic example is when "A Nation at Risk" was given to the President. I was on the ABC *Nightline* program that evening with Education Secretary Terrell Bell and Chairman David Gardner of the Excellence Committee. We were talking about the problems in education and why we were ranked third from the bottom. The President received the report and said, "See how bad off we are? You see how bad off we are? If anybody had made us do this, we'd consider it an act of war. That's why we need prayer in the school." What are we going to pray for, higher grades? It's about time to realize what's really going on. And what's going on is that nobody cares about the kids. We tell them, "Go and do your own thing, and we'll try and send you someplace—to a day care center called school."

I'd like to give a couple of numbers that may be of interest to you followed by an explanation. First, at the present time in the United States, we have 20,000 people over a 100 years old; we will have over 100,000 by the year 2000. That's a major problem because Willard Scott won't be able to read the names on the *Today* show any more. Today, approximately 61 percent of families have both spouses working full time. We are going to have 65 percent of both spouses working full time by 1990, and 75 percent by the year 2000. This means that the new poor in this country will be single heads of households, most of which are female. In addition, the only job a woman won't have by the year 2000 is that of a Catholic priest. Every other job is available. After 2000, I take no bets, but this Pope's in good shape until then. You probably realize that in

every country in the world, including the United States, 40 percent of the parts used in manufacturing are from a different country of origin. You've seen that label that says made in the U.S.A.? The truth is that 87 percent of the wool comes from Scotland or New Zealand; 68 percent of the cotton comes from—when I grew up it used to be called the Far East, now it's the near West; and over 50 percent of all the synthetics come from Singapore. The only thing made in the United States is the label "Made in the U.S.A." Our textile industry will die unless we start making some major changes, such as automation. Here are the results of automation: By automating the whole plant we can produce our goods for 5 percent of what it costs to produce overseas. The trouble is, you lose 90 percent of your workers. We are changing into a service economy. We are using robots in manufacturing—appliances, heavy equipment, and automobiles. We have one robot replacing six workers, working around the clock. You don't get 15 percent scrap, but less than 1 percent scrap. In addition, when you are painting an appliance or a car, you use 60 percent of the paint; 40 percent is being saved. And you are dealing with a thousandth of an inch tolerance, not a 16th of an inch, or a 32nd. Things actually fit. The cars work, and the cars last. I know the union's response would be, "Yes, but when we use a robot to do the welding like this, it uses one-third more electrodes." It does, because it welds everything. The people welded two-thirds of the welds and the cars fell apart. We are going to be a manufacturing society using one-third of the workers we used in 1980. We are moving from 26.3 percent of the work force in manufacturing in 1980 to 9.7 percent in the year 2000 with an increase in productivity of 500 percent. Five times more goods with one-third the people. That's why we need to go to a service economy, the basis of which is computerization and robotization.

"We are not training our kids. Seventy-five percent do not get a four-year-college education."

As educators you advise every single student to go to college. Every kid is supposed to go to college, go to college, go to college. That's great, that's marvelous, that's wonderful. Education is important, it's crucial, but it's not sufficient. We are not training our kids. Seventy-five percent of our students do not get a four-year-college education. We haven't got robot technicians, laser technicians, computer and design technicians, computer manufacturing technicians, hazardous-waste-disposal technicians, housing rehabilitation technicians, telemarketing experts, CAT-Scan readers, geriatric social workers, nuclear magnetron readers. We are not training those people. You throw them away with the bath water, as someone said. We need a high-tech, vocational education school. We started one in Fairfax. It ended up being a mathematics and science program. Where is Virginia's engineering school? Five hours away at VPI. The problem is that we have a two-tier education system in Virginia, one of the worst in all the United States. Here are some numbers of special importance in Virginia. Population increase in the United States is 5.4 percent; it is 6.7 percent in Virginia. The employment increase is 7.9 percent average between 1980-85; in Virginia it's 11.5 percent. We're 14th in one; 16th in the other. We are doing extremely well. In new businesses, we're 10th in the country, in new job generation, 6th in the country. In average teacher salary, Virginia is right smack in the middle—26 out of 51 states and the District of Columbia. The average here is $23,382; the average in the United States is $25, 313. The average graduation rate in the United States is 70.6%. In Virginia, it's 73.7%.

You are probably saying, "Gee, that's marvelous." But what happens if you take away Northern Virginia (Fairfax County, Arlington, Alexandria, and Falls Church)? In Northern Virginia we graduate close to 92 percent of our students. In the rest of Virginia, less than 50 percent of the kids get a high school education. It's a disaster area—it's worse than Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. When you take a look at the statewide average, we look fine in Virginia. That's like having our head in the refrigerator and our feet in the oven. Our average temperature is fine. Statewide statistics like the ones I have cited give a totally inaccurate impression. We have a disaster area down south, and yet we put our engineering

school down there. Sure, we have a good school over here called George Mason, and one of its professors won a Nobel prize. What does that do for us? It's about time to realize that we've got to do something for the education system in Virginia across the board, and we're not. We have the power down south, the money up here, and the politicians doing nothing.

Now let's discuss the District of Columbia. The average population change is 5.4 percent. We have the lowest level of population change—a negative .2. It's the lowest of all 50 states and the District of Columbia combined. Employment, throughout the United States, has increased 7.9 percent; in the District it is -3.3 percent. You say it shouldn't be that way, because we're paying teachers so much—after Alaska, teacher's salaries are the second highest. It is also the third lowest in pupil-teacher ratio—14.2. The crucial number is how many graduate? 54.8 percent graduate—the lowest in the United States, except for southern Virginia. Thank God for southern Virginia—but the District is worse than Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi. You've got to take a look at what the future looks like, and the only way we are going to be successful in the future is through education. That's why, when I was on Spillane's Blue Ribbon Commission, I fought for teachers' salaries. I got calls at home from the fire department and the police department saying, "You're saying that these teachers are worth more than us?" I'm saying, "Yes—absolutely, no question." They returned, "If I understand correctly, you've recommended $65,000 a year for a teacher with a Ph.D. and 15 years experience," and I answered saying, "Yes." They said, "That's more than doctors and lawyers get paid." I said, "They make more of a contribution than doctors and lawyers. They ought to be able to buy a home in this area, and they can't if they don't get these salaries." As far as I'm concerned, that was the bottom line. And I still believe that, by the way.

Here are a few of the things that are important when you start taking a look at education. We are not a leader, not even in Northern Virginia, when it comes to computerization. We are starting, but we started late and fought it. We said, it's more important to get these kids educated, not to get them trained to use computers. The computer is not an end-all, but it is the most important thing they will learn in their training. Today we're talking about learning how to write, or communicate; in the future computers are going to be the way to get around. It is going to be like driving a car. My grandfather had to know how to take apart the engine and the transmission in his car in the early 1930's because nobody else could work on that specific automobile. It was true with computers. We had to learn FORTRAN, BASIC, and COBOL to get by at the time we first started with computers. It's not true any more for driving a car—you put in the key, you learn where the gas pedal is, and you steer. It's the same thing with computers. You don't have to have BASIC, COBOL, or FORTRAN—all you have to do is get a floppy disk, put it in, and you can type. We are talking about computer literacy—not being able to take the computer apart or to program; you're not even going to have to be able to program in the future. Right now in three major corporations of the United States you can read 6,000 words into a machine; you can read for 4 1/2 hours with those words in context; you can dictate to the machine; and it types up 92 percent of what you said accurately. It corrects the spelling; it will tell you about a noun and a verb, it will tell you if you've coughed, laughed, or choked. If you correct those words, it will type 97 percent of what you have said accurately, and it will convert it to nine different languages which includes typing Hebrew backwards. It won't type idiomatic expressions—yet. It's a one-word-for-one-word correspondence. You say, "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak," and the computer translates it as "The wine is fine but the meat is rancid," or if you say, "Out of sight, out of mind," it comes out, "Invisible idiot." So it will only type one word for one word. We'll have that thing squared away in time. We will lose one-third of our secretaries, typists, and stenographers. You don't have to know how to program; you talk to the

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"We need a 20 percent salary increase across the board for all teachers; and a 40 percent increase for math, physics, chemistry, and vocational education teachers."

machine, it will program for you. Some of you saw that program a little over a year ago when they had the big party for the Statue of Liberty. The person dictated, "Mrs. Wright, write a letter right away," into an IBM machine and it typed all three "rights" properly. We have two other companies doing the same thing. We've had it since 1976. The military had a group over here called NSA—National Security Agency (that's the group that doesn't exist in Fort Meade) and the President and his wife went out and laid the cornerstone for the new buildings on television. They've been doing it for 10 years out there, and now we're making it available, without scramblers, to the public. But it means that our factory force is going to be changing also. Twenty percent of our factory force will be female in the mid-1990s. The blue collar worker is replaced by a steel collar worker controlled by a pink collar worker. That's a major change. That's why we've got to train our people to do the things we are talking about now.

I'm going to talk about a couple of things I think are rather important in the education area. One is that we need a 20 percent salary increase across the board for all teachers; and a 40 percent increase for math, physics, chemistry, and vocational education teachers, because those are the people we can't compete for with the outside industry. We live in a capitalistic society. We've got to compete.

Let me talk a little bit more about computers. When I was going through one of the major universities in Pennsylvania, where they've got a major program in robotics—probably one of the best in the world, including Japan—I went past a room just about three-quarters the size of this room, and I did a double-take. I looked in and saw a bunch of kids typing on computers. They were up to my knees, so I said to my guide, "What's this?" He said,"That's a day care center and nursery school, for the professor's and graduate assistants' kids." I said, "How old are they?" He said, "About 2 1/2." I said, "How come they're on computers?" He said, "Well, they're too young to be able to write; they haven't got the coordination." So my natural question is, "What do they do—if they can't write, how do they type?" He said, "They give them abbreviated names." I said, "Like what?" He said, "Like, for instance, Janie is J-a-n-e, James is J-i-m, Edward is E-d. Punch in E-d, and the computer says—'Good morning Edward, how are you today?' and two faces light up on the screen, a smiling face says f-i-n-e and a frowning face says b-a-d. The kid punches b-a-d and it says, 'Gee Eddy, sorry you're feeling bad today; why don't you type to me?" I said, "How old do you have to be to be in the program?" He says, "It's not a question of age; they've got to be able to walk and they have to be toilet trained." And by the way they have Saran Wrap over the keyboard. Obviously, I said, "Why Saran Wrap?" He said, "They are kids; their mothers give them peanut butter and jelly sandwiches or yogurt and it gets caught in the keys—you've got to keep them clean." The point I am trying to bring out is that, this is what's happening in the world today.

About five years ago my wife had to go back and take a course in computers just to keep up with the kids. In Fairfax, there are 16 sight words you have to know to go to first grade, "in, on, run, etc." She was teaching this to her kindergarteners when all of a sudden this kid jumps up and says, "I can spell 'run,' Mrs. Cetron, run—r-u-n, carriage return." The kids have computers at home. Whenever she runs into a problem, she goes to the sixth grade gifted and talented class at Mantua, and has a kid come down and show her how to program. One day when he was finished, he said, "Mrs. Cetron, you've gotta learn faster on this computer; you're taking time away from my education." We are talking about things that are happening today: computers are here, they are going to stay here, we are going to need them in the future. It's like learning to drive a car—without it the kids aren't going to get by. We are not teaching them in the schools, because the schools say it's "training." What do they consider driver's education, if it's not training. The second most

important course taken in the United States is driver's education—not English, not social studies, but driver's education. What are we here for? It's time to realize that we are here for basics and we are not getting the basics out. We ought to be setting standards for school. We ought to be setting an 850 minimum combined SAT score for entering schools of education. If you don't get a 3.2 average at the end of the sophomore year, go into the fields of medicine, law, or engineering—not teaching. It's our most important profession and we are not taking care of it. It's about time to realize we've got to make some changes across the board, or we'll never be able to compete with Europe, where children attend school 180 days 6 hours a day, 180 days a year. In Asia, where students have higher scores, they go 8 hours a day, 240 days a year, and they have 2 hours of homework every night (we have only 15 minutes). If we don't go to a 210-day year, 7-hour day and 1 hour of homework, we are not going to compete with people overseas. It just can't be done. I know that the 3 most important reasons people go into teaching—June, July, and August—will no longer exist. I'm sorry—that is not what we are here for, and we sure are not out there collecting or harvesting crops; we are out of that already. It's about time to realize that there are things we will have to do.

"Teaching. It's our most important profession and we are not taking care of it."

As more and more people are working, the schools are going to play a different role. They should be putting day care centers for three to five year olds in the schools. The nurse is already there; the school is there; you've got a playground; the kids have role models in the older kids; and they are going to get sick when they are 3 not when they are 5. You don't have to educate them for 2 years, but you have to take care of them, especially as more and more people are working. And these kids have learned to be long-range planners. What do I mean by long-range planners? You learn when you go to these day care centers. You pick up a toy, some bigger kid comes along and wants that toy, you've got two choices, neither of which is very nice. Either you give him the toy and you haven't got it, or you don't give him the toy and you get slugged. So what do you do—well you learn you are not permitted to go into a bathroom with a toy, so when this big kid comes over for the toy, you run to the teacher and give it to the teacher, then you go get a toy not quite as nice but close enough, give it to the kid and then you go back to the teacher and get the toy back. That's long-range planning—you learn that. You learn also to get along with other kids. Believe it or not, the kids who have gone to day care centers get higher scores, do better in school, and get along better with other kids. I know it goes against every single thing the Moral Majority says—mothers are supposed to be home taking care of the kids. When I go out in Nebraska and speak someone says, "The reason we have unemployment today is because the women are working." Yes, it's about time they started. The fact is that the kids do better, because they are going to day care centers. The problem we really have is the newborn to three-year-old; that's where you've got to get your community centers, your churches, your synagogues, and other institutions to help take care of the kids. In addition, we must get rid of the day-care program we already have. The major problem we have right now is giving welfare to mothers so they can stay home because they have kids—not because they're disabled, not because they can't get a job, but because they have kids at home. We ought to have a workfare program; if the only reason you're at home is because of the kids, drop the kids off at a day-care center and go get a job. A lot of these women should be working in day-care centers helping take care of their kids and other people's kids so they can go to work. The first generation takes welfare and is embarrassed. The second generation takes it and is not embarrassed—their parents did it. And the third generation wants more. That is a waste of our people and a waste of self-respect for the kids themselves.

"We ought to have a workfare program; if the only reason you're at home is because of the kids, drop the kids off at a day-care center and go get a job."

Another thing we need to change is deregulation. You know what deregulation is: it's when the big airlines get bigger, the small little feeder air-

lines get smaller, and the middle goes out; it goes out across the board. When you go to a hotel, you go to the Sheraton, you go to the Marriott, or you go to the Hyatt, or else you get the sleep-cheap at the Econolodge or Hampton Inn; again, the middle goes out. You go out to eat at the fancy place or you go to a fast-food restaurant; the middle goes out. Where do we go when we go to the hospital? We go to the great big hospital or a local Surgi-Center, or we go to the "7-Eleven medicine," "convenience medicine," "inventory care centers," or "doc-in-a-box." The point is that you have to choose one end or the other; there is no more middle. It's called deregulation when it happens across the board. If we go to these big hotels or little hotels, what happens to Howard Johnson's, what happens to Holiday Inn, what happens to Ramada Inn? They go out of business. That's the perfect place to put up our old age homes where they can take care of themselves if they're still ambulatory. There are many changes out there, but these are changes we've got to educate our people for.

"The Democrats need only three things to win the election: money, a charismatic leader, and a black leader. If the Democrats get these, they will win."

Deregulation is part of the Republican Administration, and the truth is—and you're going to get upset now, but you better understand it—that we are not going to have a Democrat in the White House until 1996, because we as Democrats have raised our kids to be Republicans. The kids grow up, we send them to the Harvard Business School, and then they say, "If they don't bring anything to the table, we don't feed them." We are not going to spend money if it isn't going to bear fruit on "my watch." All we care about is the bottom line. Our politicians don't care about what is "not going to happen on my watch." We don't spend our money on things that bear fruit in the future—things like education, training, and research and development—because the results don't show up soon enough, and, therefore, other countries pass us and spend money on R and D and education and training. It's a major problem, and nobody cares. Now you say—well how do you know we are not going to have a Democrat in the White House until 1996? We said that in the 1977-78 year-end issue of People Magazine. In 1971, we said we expected Iran to be unstable, and it was. We went through a lot of indicators, such as the income differences between the upper tenth and the bottom tenth of the population. And we said that Poland was unstable because of the workers—that was three years before Solidarity. We had a lot of credibility, and they called us up again and said, "What is going to happen now?" We talked about the education issue, we talked about the feminist issue, and then they asked what was going to happen in 2 years—in 1980. We said four things in that year-end issue: one, we expected some ultra conservative like ex-Governor Reagan would win the nomination; two, he would win with a landslide; three, he would carry every state in 1984. (We were off by one state by half a point.) Then we said, in addition to this, that he would step down, probably near the end of 1987, turn it over to his vice president, whoever that was, because he would be a lame-duck president. As a lame-duck, his party has a 51% chance of getting re-elected. On the other hand, a sitting president has a 55 to 60% chance of getting reelected.

Now you say, "If I understand you correctly, you're saying Bush." That's right, I'm saying Bush. You say, "You mean the wimp and the preppy." Well the wimp and the preppy you're talking about happens to have been a fighter pilot in the Navy during World War II who was picked up after being shot down and brought back and flew again. He was the head of the CIA who opened up the talks for both Nixon and Kissinger in China. He was also first in his class at Yale in economics and a three-letter man. I don't have to like this, but it is a fact. You say, "But he does nothing, the man does absolutely nothing." That's right, that's what you're supposed to do as vice president. Truman had a charismatic leader as his president, and Truman did nothing, kept his mouth shut and became president—a very good president. If you look at numbers only, forget everything else, numbers only—near the year 2000 the three most

important groups will be Hispanics, blacks, and the elderly. For your information, the vice president's daughter-in-law, Jeff's wife, is Mexican/American. Jeff speaks Spanish; his wife speaks Spanish. Thirty-one percent of the electoral votes come from California, Texas, and Florida. You say, "But he doesn't know anybody, he doesn't do anything." He knows every single head of state, and he knows them all under stress. He's been to every single state funeral overseas. What I am trying to tell you is that you're going to have him until 1996, and it looks like there's a very good possibility that, in 1992, his vice-presidential running mate will be somebody like Sandra Day O'Connor.

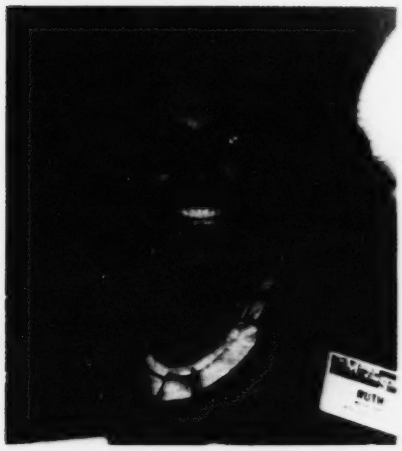
The Democrats need only three things to win the election: money, a charismatic leader, and a black leader. If the Democrats get these, they will win. The problem is that it's not in the cards, and educators had better plan not to get any more federal money because of it. Now, who is Bush going to have to run against? The Doles can't run because they said the President should admit he made a mistake in Irangate and that he was wrong; the Republication National Committee won't support them at all. Then you talk about Kemp—he's also too far right; he can't get support from the conservative Democrats he needs to win elections. Howard Baker just became chief-of-staff—and the reason he did that was that he knew he couldn't get elected. Jim Baker is probably one of the best people they've got in the party. He kept the president out of trouble when he was part of the White House staff during the first term. During the second term, he worked at tax reform, cutting down our trade deficits so our dollar wouldn't be as high so we could sell our products. In addition to this, he is the one who worked on the tax reduction, in the Gramm-Rudman area. He's very bright, and he is the campaign manager for Bush. The Republican party is pretty much squared away. The only Democrat who has a chance to make it is Lee Iacocca, probably. He doesn't look like a Democrat, but he is probably the one who has more charisma. And finally, the cradle of the Presidency—Virginia—will have a person as vice-presidential candidate: Gov. Robb. What this all means is that you are going to live with the funding you've got today. It's going to be rough.

My wife teaches in Mantua, as I said. It's a school for all seasons. It's a very, very fine school, and she tells me the kids are brighter, sharper, and more verbal then ever; that's our future. We have to work with that. The perception is that things are going to get better, and I've read Emily Feistritzer's work about this—more teachers available, all we have to do is hire them. That's nonsense. The figures we should take a look at are part-time teachers as well as regular. You need full-time teachers; you need qualified people; you need higher salaries for these people. The perception is that things are going to get better. They are not going to get better until we pay more. We've got to start paying our teachers more. We've got to start getting better programs, and when it comes to the problem of who will receive the highest salaries, it will not be the person who works on computers or robots, because the jobs that a robot assigns are computerized. The biggest and highest salaries will still be the person who is creative, the person who can't be robotized or computerized. We need creativity. Next, we need schools, and the most important thing I left for the end—the people who make the schools operate. The people who take care of feeding students, who take care of getting them to the schools, who take care of the libraries, of other services, and the administration of the computers, are you people. You are truly the support area. Without you, the schools could not get anything done. But the truth is that we are here to support the teachers—and sometimes we tend to forget that. People say, "My God, they are getting paid more than some of the principals and administrators." Well, they ought to be—like the hospital administrator gets paid much less than the surgeon. It's all the same. The people who deal with the clients are the most important, and in schools they are teachers. ■

"The perception is that things are going to get better. They are not going to get better until we pay more. We've got to start paying our teachers more."

How to Achieve the Academic Mission of the Schools for All Students

Dr. Ruth Love, President
Ruth Love Associates
Former Superintendent,
Chicago Public Schools



If we work upon marble, it will perish; if we work upon brass, time will efface it; if we rear temples, they will crumble into dust; but if we work upon immortal minds, and view them with love, knowledge, and a sense of justice, we write on those tablets something that will brighten all eternity. I believe we have an unparalleled opportunity to work upon the minds of our children as we attempt to prepare them for the 21st century by achieving academic excellence for all of our students. It's not an impossible dream; it's difficult, but not an impossible dream. But it is predicated on a set of fundamental assumptions about our young people. First, and foremost, we must believe that they can all learn, that they all have the intellectual ability to participate in the educational process. And secondly, and very important, we must believe that teachers can learn to teach—that no one starts out to be a bad teacher, no one begins thinking, "I'm not going to do a good job." So we must find ways to help our teachers help our students.

I would just remind us that education has always been a part of the fabric of American society, even before the adoption of the Constitution under which we have been governed for 400 years. The Northwest Ordinance set forth a provision for the establishment of schools. And since that time education has played a very important part in the American society. It remains today the primary vehicle for social and economic mobility. We have come a long way since Horace Mann's subject school concept. We have had to face fads and stare down simplistic solutions. But I think we have a very long way to go before we educate all of the children of all of the people. One of the reasons why I have remained connected with public education is because it is a very inclusive process, not exclusive; and if you believe that, you believe that the masses of people ought to be educated. And I would also remind us that whenever this nation is in trouble, and it's in a bit of trouble right now, it has always turned to education to find a solution. Think back with me to Sputnik—those of you who will admit to being old enough to remember Sputnik—and you will recall that there was a revolution in the factions of America when we realized that the Soviet Union had outstripped us. We turned to education again when we decided we needed vocational education. It was the schools that were asked to do something: the gifted—it was the schools again that were asked to adapt and to adopt new curricula; the handicapped, the disadvantaged—again the American public said the schools can do it. And so today when we find that 27 to 30 million people have gone through our schools and cannot read or write, and the nation has turned to us again and said, "Let's do something about it," We are the only country in the world which talks about helping illiterates who have gone to school. Most countries in the world talk about illiterates in terms of people who didn't have the chance to go to school. So we have an awesome challenge and an awesome responsibility as we begin to seriously address academically educating all of the students. And I maintain that there is no way to address the mission of the schools without addressing the academic mission of the schools, because indeed that is the mission of the schools. We have spent, to my way of thinking, far too much time on national reports. In fact, I am tired of national reports that diagnose the problem, and push the blame onto the school. I am reminded of what we used to say about high schools blaming the elementary schools, the elementary schools blaming the parents, and the mother blaming the father's relatives. Well, I think that is what we are beginning to do with national reports. We are blaming and we are prescribing simplistic solutions as if to say that if we automatically extend the school day or if we automatically extend the school year, that something magical will happen. And I submit to you that merely doing that, though it may be important, will not do the job. I think there have to be some fundamental changes in the way we do business with youngsters.

This morning I'd like to briefly discuss two programs: the effective schools program and Paideia. And those of you who know Mortimer

Adler, know that no man is going to agree with him on everything—so while I'm discussing, I just want you to know that when you fight with a man who is 85 years old, he always wins. Especially if he is a genius—as Mortimer is. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, a beautiful, energetic educational researcher from Michigan State University set out against the prevailing thought of that time to find schools that worked. Wilbur Brookover, Larry Lazotte, Ron Edmonds, and others decided that it was imperative that we look at what worked. I recall at that time the only description that we had of schools that worked, and in a coherent fashion, was in a small publication from the Council on Basic Education, if you will recall, which pre-dated the effective schools movement, and we used it over and over again because we were desperately trying to show the American people that schools can work, and the CBE people were the first ones to identify and describe about five schools, I believe, that worked in this country. And eventually, Wilbur Brookover and his compatriots from the universities, against the backdrop of Jim Coleman's formidable study (which really kind of implied that schools don't make a difference for some youngsters), began to identify effective schools. If they could identify schools that did make a difference, then they might be able to identify criteria for success with academic achievement. They looked for schools where pupil performance matched or exceeded the national norm. And they described the distinguishing characteristics of those schools. It was no surprise that they found that most of the schools had recurring characteristics. It was nothing magic—they didn't find any magic—they found a lot of hard work. When they found a successful school, there were certain kinds of things that occurred. And I'd just like to share with you what those were.

One, they found that every school that worked had a strong leader. So leadership became one of the characteristics of a successful school. Here again, it was not a charismatic person who became the leader, the principal of a school, necessarily. They found that the person knew certain things—knew instruction very well—was indeed the instructional leader, was actively involved in the instructional program; tending toward the objective, helping the faculty develop the instructional plan; spent time observing and participating in the classroom; offered alternatives to teachers about what they ought to be doing; shared the leadership with those teacher-leaders in the school. And they found, as much as we talk about leadership styles, that leadership function is far more important than leadership style. What you do and what you cause others to do makes a tremendous difference as opposed as to what style you have. For too long in America we have been in the midst of glamourizing, believing that you have to be charismatic in order to make a difference. In fact, you have to be *good* in order to make a difference. You have to know what you are talking about. You have to know education, and spend tremendous amounts of time on it. Those are the things that they found that make a difference in terms of strong leadership. Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, in their book, say, "Managers do things right, but leaders do the right thing," I believe an effective school leader has to be both—a good manager and a good leader.

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Another characteristic that they found repeatedly in effective schools was high student expectations. They somehow communicated to the students that, "you have the ability to learn and we expect you to learn." The teachers believed it, and that's the most difficult correlate to implement, primarily because it means, for some, changing a set of beliefs about students who make a difference one way or the other. But we have to communicate expectations. Now, we are all familiar with the old Wilbur Brookover study that shows a group of teachers being given misinformation about students: saying they did not have the ability to learn, they were low achievers or (I guess they used the term) "slow learners." (You know we have so many labels that we use to promote our feelings about young people.) Another group of teachers were told that their students

"I hope I live long enough to see academics have the same status as athletics."

"The best disciplined youngsters are the youngsters who are disciplined inside -- not the youngsters who are externally controlled."

had exceptional ability, and obviously those teachers who felt their students had exceptional abilities had students who achieved. Now there is nothing unusual about this. We can do the same thing today and get the same results. But being able to say to students: "You have the ability; we expect you to learn; we are going to set our standards so that you will achieve," and often the kinds of intervention that will help those youngsters achieve is very important. I believe that finding has to do with the fact that no one can make you inferior without your consent. And we have to help our young people to understand that. They aren't inferior because they live on the wrong side of the tracks, or their parents happen to be black, or they speak a foreign language, or they have handicaps, or whatever it might be. We have to help teachers be motivating and exciting about lifting those expectations of standards in our schools so that we can provide the right kinds of alternatives for those students.

The third and very important correlate is academic programs. In all the effective schools they found that academics were important. You know, I hope I live long enough to see academics have the same status as athletics. Because whatever we believe is important we ought to lift that to the same status or superior status. But all those effective schools made academics a top priority. The basics were very important. And in all these schools they had comprehensive programs—a comprehensive curriculum. But there was unquestionably the objective to achieve academically in the basic skills. Every school had its plan of action that they used in order to accomplish the academics. They looked at things like time-on-task and found that, indeed, contrary to earlier studies, the teachers in these schools spent the majority of their teaching time instructing the students—not doing other things—and time-on-task becomes very important because we lose so much time in the education of our young people by all of the interruptions and disruptions. But let's assume that we cleared away all of the "administrativia"—how much time do teachers spend interacting with students? That is the question. So time-on-task is very important. Another, in terms of academics, is direct teaching. It is very difficult to accomplish, but they found in those schools that were most effective throughout the country that teachers exposed all of the students to all the instructional approaches. You know, we tend to teach high achieving kids the most, some kids get the best we have, others get average and others get not so much. The researchers believe that the youngsters can learn and so these teachers, without being instructed to do so, use direct teaching with all students. Grouping is another aspect of the academic focus around effective schools. They focus more on heterogeneity than on homogeneity. And they found that the degree to which they had youngsters of varying abilities together was the degree to which they were able to succeed in educating the youngsters in those schools.

Another correlate or characteristic was that of school climate. School climate—an orderly, purposeful environment is critical. There is nothing mysterious about that. We know that if youngsters are not well-behaved, they can't learn. We know that if we have standards of behavior, students will adhere to them. And in all of those schools that were considered effective, back in those early days, there were some kind of standards for discipline. The students understood, these are the rules, these are the consequences for breaking the rules. And these were used instructionally, not just as a set of codes sitting out there, but they were used to help motivate youngsters to change their behavior. Because the best disciplined youngsters are the youngsters who are disciplined inside—not the youngsters who are externally controlled. They looked at the physical plant. No matter whether the school was old, unpainted—it was well cared for. And students were a part of that. There was a psychological climate in the school—which relates very much to expectations again—that they would learn. The relationships between the adults in the school, the collegiality, was critically important in an effective school. You know, the whole notion of sharing in a school: if you have a good idea, share it

with a colleague. That is talked about more than it is carried out in many situations. In these schools, teachers had no fear of being able to share and to discuss and show respect. You know, whatever we want students to learn, we have to teach it and we have to model it. And so, if we aren't respectful to each other, how can we expect youngsters to be respectful? If we are not scholarly, how can we expect them to be scholarly? We say to youngsters, "You are to read X number of books in a week or per month." We have to demonstrate that we read. So it is critically important, as it was in those schools, that teachers and all of the adults model the kind of behavior that they expect of youngsters. A learning atmosphere was one where education was serious business. It could be fun, but it was serious business.

There was a reward system in all of those schools. Now, let's think about it, what do we reward students for? What do we reward teachers for? We should reward teachers, as they did in those schools, for doing a good job, for having made youngsters achieve. And there were systems developed in the effective schools to reward teachers. There were incentives for youngsters to learn. One of the things that I have learned from business in my various contacts is that they always provide incentives and a reward system for excellence. And they know a lot about human behavior in that regard. I remember, in Oakland, we developed a three-way learning contract between the students, the teachers, and the parents. We took what we wanted to work on. We want to work on our academics? OK, that's part of the contract. Everyone agrees. The teacher will do more to instruct, give more homework; the student will spend more time studying; the parent will monitor—whatever it happens to be, it was an informal contract that made a tremendous difference. There were things that they could see that were tangible. I also recall implementing the effective schools program in Chicago—and Chicago is a massive city with 600 schools and a few problems, but we developed the robot system of taking attendance. I know you are up on technology and you understand how that works; it automatically calls parents. And once in our system, the robots became dysfunctional in all of the schools in which they operated and called the parents simultaneously at 1:30 a.m. We had perfect attendance the next day. We also had a lot of hostile parents who thought the superintendent pushed a button that caused that to happen. Oh, how I wish I could have done that! But recognition for what people do as part of the school climate is critically important—finding ways on a monthly basis, on a weekly basis, in classrooms, and school-wide to recognize success. It has a powerful impact, and they found it repeatedly in those effective schools throughout the country.

Are those original, effective schools, still operating, and are they still effective? One of the problems we have in education is that something is effective two or three years, and then it goes away. But, in fact, not one of those effective schools used additional financing; and, secondly, they are still considered effective. And that's a very compelling argument for us to think about as we attempt to make changes in our particular environment. We don't necessarily have to have extra money to do a good job. We need extra money to do a better job. That's the important thing.

The fifth correlate was monitoring. Someone has said that what gets monitored gets taught, and I suppose that is true in many instances. What they saw, in effective schools, was frequent evaluation of the effectiveness of the entire program, schoolwide, grade level by grade level, and interpretation of the evaluation findings to modify the curriculum and their instructional program. We don't want to just have the results, without having it fed back into the system. There were student profiles, and the test score results were communicated—for what they did measure and what they did not measure. I believe that one of the most important things that the effective schools movement has given us is the ability to disaggregate the data. You know, in schools that do very well—are at the national norm—they tend to think that's the epitome without

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realizing that half of those students are below the national norm by the way our statistics work, and so disaggregating the data means that you look at and break out the achievement data by various factors—it can be by race and ethnicity, it can be by language group, it can be by economic level, it can be by gender—but it can give you a real view of what the individual school is all about, how that school is really doing. Let's suppose that you have 50 or 75 percent of the students doing well—as I am sure all of you principals will have—but let's look at those who aren't doing well and see what we can do to raise the level of academic achievement for them.

One of the things that we did in our grading system in Chicago was to have report cards changed so that students got one grade for actual achievement and one grade for effort, because sometimes I think our report cards convey the wrong message, both to the student and to the parents. And sometimes teachers begin to believe it. So we broke that out, and it had a tremendous impact on what students ultimately did, because they realized: "Maybe I got a good grade but I didn't exert myself very much," or, "maybe I got a low grade and I could have done better,"—so we broke it out by effort, and by actual achievement and that made a tremendous difference. The other thing that was found in those effective schools was that you can't wait until June to tell students how they are doing and to tell their parents how they are doing, that assessment and monitoring has to be ongoing. It has to be ongoing throughout the year. So whatever your check points are--be sure that everybody knows and everyone has the information.

"We cannot use the lack of parental involvement as an excuse for why the youngsters aren't learning; somehow educators have to have ownership for the academic achievement of the youngsters."

Now since that initial review of effective schools, and since it became a movement, people have added all kinds of correlates to it. One of the things that Ron Edmonds, who popularized the effective schools movement, said is that the chief means for success resides almost exclusively inside the school. What did he mean by that? He meant simply that you reward parent involvement—it's important—but whether or not parents are involved has nothing to do with our responsibility for providing the best possible education to them. In other words, we cannot use the lack of parental involvement as an excuse for why the youngsters aren't learning, that somehow educators have to have ownership for the academic achievement of the youngsters, particularly where many of our youngsters have other priorities in terms of work, and surviving. And so our responsibility is to educate the youngsters. Other people, though, have added, parent involvement as a component; still others have added support services; but I added my very own—and that was staff development. And I added staff development because I recognize that we are a people business and that unless we invest in the people who are teaching our youngsters, we aren't going to make a difference. There are several things about staff development that I will share with you.

First and foremost, staff development, to be effective, has to be locally school-based. Staff development has to be predicated on adult learning experience. And we know that adults learn not in large groups like this; they learn best when what they learn is practical and useful. And think about the teachers now. What they learn is practical and useful, that they have some opportunity for interaction, and that staff development is predicated on their experiential background. Teachers do not come without lots of information, lots of knowledge, and our programs are to capitalize on that. I also believe that staff development can foster collegiality, there ought to be a series that calls for group meetings, and testing out in classrooms—that staff development ought to ultimately end up with a better collegial atmosphere, with people knowing the instructor in a more technically important way, with greater knowledge of the subject matter, in order to be focused on the needs of teachers, and it ought to be focused on the strengths of teachers. Those are just some of the things that I have added, and that happens to be part of my business in the private sector, where we developed a 12-hour course for teachers,

interactive—because I don't believe people ought to sit and look at videotape—and there are workbooks—and the exercises in the workbooks are probably more important than the videos, because it helps them change their behavior because that's what we have to do if we are going to educate the youngsters today. Now let me move on with that, because I see that our time is fleeting. I believe every school can be an effective school. I believe we have to be committed, though, to change the status quo.

Let me talk about a direction of change in which I have been involved and which I find very exciting. The Paideia Project grew out of Mortimer Adler's concern that we were losing too many children. (You know, I believe that some of the dropouts drop out in the second and third grade, when they become psychological dropouts and they exclude us long before they get into secondary school.) But Adler was wise enough and persuasive enough to get a team of twenty of us together to write three books, and if you haven't seen them, they are three paperback books. We have reduced the price so they sell for less than $5 each. The *Paideia Proposal*, the *Paideia Programs and Possibilities*, and the *Paideia Program*. Now I have to say, categorically, that I disagree with Mortimer that we ought to eliminate certain things—like vocational education. I think that is unrealistic. I think we ought to make it better, more realistic, but I don't think we ought to eliminate it. Neither do I think we ought to eliminate tests. So I think if some youngsters can learn to take tests, all youngsters can learn to take tests. But I do agree with him that all students can learn. When he says that the best education for the best is the best education for all—I agree with that. And it sure helps to have our own in-house philosopher say that. And when Mortimer says it, it somehow catches the imagination of people whom we educators can't always reach. We constantly tell him he is not an educator—but he doesn't seem to understand that.

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The things that we came out with were part of the Paideia Program—and Paideia is a Greek word which means bringing up children. But the English word I like better, and that is "learning." I think that is really a beautiful concept. It is predicated on the assumption that we will teach all children and that they will be able to achieve well. We use three different approaches to teaching: The "coaching" approach, of course, is working with small groups and individuals. The "didactic" approach is what most teachers do—lecture. And the "Socractic" approach is the seminar approach to education and the one that I find most useful, because I believe it can provide us with ways of getting students involved in their own learning process, and we have been setting up Paideia schools throughout the country—we set up four in Chicago—our most low-achieving schools—and I want you to know we trained all those teachers and principals in the schools—we sent them to St. John's University. The most important thing that appeared in those schools was not that they learned how to teach all over again, but that they spent a lot more time helping students by the Socratic method—the questioning method—helping them to learn the subject—helping them to think through what they were doing—helping them to develop reasoning skills, helping them build confidence in their ability to learn. And that's why I bought into the Paideia program. It was tremendous to watch the changed levels in low schools go up precipitously. No magic—just hard work. But dialogue and the relationship between the teachers and the students changed tremendously when teachers felt a greater comfort level. It's one thing to be the authority figure and to tell students. It's quite another to be able to gather information and to ask questions and to get kids to think and get their attention. And we have some tremendous evaluation for those programs—both formative and summative evaluations -which show what students thought about those programs. And if you can turn around a high school in Chicago—you can walk on water. We hear a lot of talk today about thinking skills—as if you can develop thinking in isolation from subject content. I don't buy the argument that we can just develop a

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"I don't buy the argument that we can just develop a course on thinking. I think thinking should not be additive — it should be inclusive, it should be a part of whatever we teach."

course on thinking. I think thinking should not be additive—it should be inclusive, it should be a part of whatever we teach. So it's really important, I think, in the Paideia Program, in the scheme of things, to understand what it's about—those three methods of teaching represent the core of the Paideia Program, and we think that certain aspects of each subject ought to be taught in certain ways, and you can read the book to find those. But to provide for these three kinds of teaching calls for flexibility.

There are four things that must be changed in a school in order to have a Paideia school.

1. The way that we schedule youngsters—because now we schedule them only for the didactic way of educating them.
2. Deployment of staff, how we use the strengths and talents of staff members.
3. The curriculum, which we develop and adhere to with advice from faculty and administrators.
4. Training of staff; people ought to be trained to do whatever we need them to do.

I have a lot of information about how we do all those things, but since I am running short of time, let me just summarize by saying that if we are to change the academic achievement of all students, we must revisit our belief systems. Do we really believe they can all learn? We must have a definitive curriculum, and it's not based on the publisher's textbook, but based on what we think youngsters ought to learn, and we should buy the books and the materials to support that. We must find ways of attracting and keeping the best teachers we can find—the most qualified—and I believe we do that in several ways. One, we must increase the salary. Two, we must find ways to help them receive ongoing professional development that supports what they do that is good. We must monitor them and we must monitor our ranks and get rid of those who are not doing a good job. I don't know of a good teacher who doesn't resent teachers who are not doing a good job. So I think we've got to find ways to reinforce the good, make it economically all right to stay in the classroom—where you don't have to move into administration in order to be recognized as a good teacher. I also think that we've got to begin to teach to the multicultural diversity represented in our country. Whether it is represented in our classrooms or not, we ought to be teaching to diversity. I believe not in the melting-pot theory but in the salad-bowl theory. And you know, in salads each ingredient is important—that is, each culture is important. So I think we ought to teach to what I call the salad bowl theory. I also believe that we have to address the issue of institutional obsolescence -that is, the fact that our classrooms are organized the way they were organized in 1920. We've got to revisit the whole issue of obsolescence and see if there are not ways that we can structurally change our schools and our classrooms. I also think it is important that we look at the whole issue of collective bargaining, and the enormous amount of time that we spend in bargaining. Now I believe in labor and management—but we must have management *and* labor, rather than always management *vs.* labor. Someone has said that education costs too much, and it is an expensive enterprise. But my response to that is, if you think education is expensive—try ignorance—it's much more expensive—and I can detail what both expenses are.

"If we are to achieve the academic mission of the schools, we have to limit our responsibility."

If we are to achieve the academic mission of the schools, we have to *limit* our responsibility, and this will require including the family in many of our schools so that the family clearly understands *both* what the schools can and will do *and* what the schools cannot do—some of which is the family's responsibility. It seems to me that we have to say very loudly and clearly what we are willing to be held responsible for, and I believe the core of that has to be the academics. I don't mean we should elimi-

nate all the other services, but somebody else has to assume some responsibility for some of the things that the school now assumes responsibility for. I have a friend who is accustomed to praying who says that we now ask of the schools what we used to pray to God for—and that is everything. I also believe that we have to allocate our resources and our time to the academics. Whatever we have as a priority, we ought to be able to look at our budget and say, "This is where our priorities are." If we can't do that, there is something wrong with our priorities. And we ought to, as I mentioned earlier, elevate the status of the academics in our school, and there are all kinds of ways to do that—you can figure that out. We ought to also have a way for students to assume some responsibility for their own education. They ought to be able to evaluate how they are doing in attendance—what's their attitude about school—how they are doing with homework—are they really taking school seriously? Find some ways to build that into the educational system.

Every student ought to have a support system that helps that student learn how to learn and gives him help with those things that he needs help with. And until the emphasis is not a haphazard one—most of our support systems are haphazard—we must eliminate the barriers which prevent access for all students. Equity in excellence is something that those national reports did not address. I believe that all youngsters, regardless of their economic background, their language background, their ethnic background, ought to have an opportunity to be in all those courses. And we have to revisit the whole issue of tracking and grouping in order to do that. Finally, I think that board policies ought to be such that they reinforce the academic program, that they reinforce what we are doing, that we look at the standards that boards are able to pass through policy, that we look at promotion, retention—who attends the gifted classes and who attends the classes for the retarded. In Chicago we found that 85 percent of all the youngsters in the retarded classes—and I say retarded classes deliberately—were black children and Hispanic children, that only 5 percent of those in the gifted classes happened to be black or Hispanic. There was something wrong with that. Do you believe in the distribution of intellectual ability? Then we ought to have the same representation proportionately. We need to look at those.

I also think that we must demystify things like math and science. You know that we show students and we communicate to them that these subjects are difficult, so that students believe they *are* difficult—they believe that they can't do anything about it. Somehow we've got to change that. And finally, we must use technology to help us. We must make all technology user-friendly to our youngsters. I have stopped fighting the computers. I've finally decided to join in. If I am going to talk about future schools, I've got to learn how to work that computer. It's a great threat to people in my office, though, that you can do this. But given the gap between the mission and the reality, we have a ways to go. But we in education can do anything that we decide is a priority. If we decide that academic achievement is critical to achieving our mission in the schools, I believe we can do it.

I leave you with a quote from Ralph Ellison's book, *The Invisible Man*—where he describes a young boy trying very hard to grow up. He says: "If you can show me how to cling to that which is real to me, while teaching me a way to a larger society, I will not only drop my hostilities and my defense, I will also sing your praises and I will help you make the desert bear fruit."

Let's all bear fruit. ■

"I don't mean we should eliminate all other services, but somebody else has to assume some responsibility for some of the things that the school now assumes responsibility for."

Teaching to Increase the Academic Emphasis for All Students

John L. Hynes
Junior High School Teacher
Bethlehem (New York) Central Schools

Let me begin by telling two stories: one sad but amusing, the other exhilarating—at least for me. Both stories are germane to the topic of this conference—the mission of the schools—and both have happy endings.

Approximately 12 years ago, I was teaching European history at a small college in upstate New York. In spite of its being a private college, many of its students were from disadvantaged backgrounds—just how disadvantaged was driven home to me at my very first class. I was giving my first lecture of the semester in a freshman course in Western Civilization; my subject was the Renaissance in Italy, and I was determined to mesmerize my students. It was a magnificent performance: in 50 minutes I covered everything—from Medici banking interests to the frescos Titian painted for the Venetian Doge. As the hour ended, I stopped talking, the students set down their pens, a few began to applaud, many looked awestruck or perhaps merely befuddled, and after a few moments of silence nearly everyone began filing out of the room. I was basking in a state of euphoria, congratulating myself on a job well done, and convinced that this was the best darned lecture these kids had ever heard or were ever likely to hear on the Italian Renaissance. At this moment, my blissful reverie was interrupted by a student who shyly approached and said, "Mr. Hynes, what's the Pope?" I was shattered and dumbfounded. I looked at the student and could only mutter, "What?" "What's the Pope?" she repeated. "What?" I said again. "What's this Pope you have been talking about for the past hour? I mean, 'the Pope this' and 'the Pope that.' What's the Pope?" Well, ladies and gentlemen, I want you to know I was so astounded by this unexpected, yet simple and direct question that for the life of me I couldn't remember. I hemmed and hawed and stammered and finally managed to blurt out something about the Pope being rich, living in Rome, surrounded by Michelangelos, and running the Catholic Church. But that's all I could manage as my illusions about my wonderful lecture were destroyed by that devastating question, "What's the Pope?"

My second story concerns the final scene from a movie that was popular about three or four years ago; the movie was called *Educating Rita* and, as I recall, was highly praised and nominated for several awards. This movie contains one of the most exhilarating and wonderful scenes I've ever seen in a movie. Those of you who saw the film will recall that it concerns an English working-class woman who decides at age 30 or thereabouts to take herself to University and study literature. Given the nature of this woman's economically and culturally deprived background and the abysmal preparation she would have received in her previous schooling, the odds were overwhelmingly against her succeeding at the university. The amusing plot concerns Rita's efforts and her relationship with her literature professor, played by Michael Caine. My exhilarating scene comes at the end of the film when Professor Michael Caine asks Rita what she is going to do now that she has finished her literature degree and Rita replies, "I don't know. I have so many options." For me, that was a most wonderful moment, one that defined the purpose of education and one that crystallized for me the reason that I am a teacher. In a

flash, there it was: education is about options—giving people options, the chance to choose one thing over another.

I said earlier that my two stories had happy endings, and that both were related to the topic of this conference—the mission of the schools. Rita's happy ending is apparent in that final scene, and I am happy to report that my student, so curious about the Renaissance papacy, went on to pass my course and to take her B.A. degree. By the way, she told me later that she had never heard a teacher talk so fast about so many things, nor had she ever suspected that studying the past (her exact words were "learning about dead people") could be so interesting. More importantly, with her degree, she, like Rita, had options available to her. And this is where an emphasis on academic learning for all students is directly related to the mission of the schools. It is my contention that the mission of the schools is to provide options for students—all students—every one of them. And the best way to provide options is to see that students engage in academic learning. To be educated is to have options; that's the point as I see it.

"The mission of the schools is to provide options for students— all students— every one of them. And the best way to provide options is to see that students engage in academic learning. To be educated is to have options— that's the point as I see it."

From my own experience as a teacher, I am confident that all students can learn and benefit from a program stressing academic learning. For this reason, I am optimistic. However, from my experience as a teacher, I am pessimistic about many of our schools succeeding in the mission of providing students with real educations, that is to say, with real options. I am optimistic about students' ability because I have taught students of every conceivable ability and from every conceivable socioeconomic background, from seventh grade through college. I am pessimistic about many schools succeeding in this endeavor because of entrenched institutional forces and a misguided system of beliefs that permeates American society. Many schools have no sense of what their mission is; they do not know what they are about. And, furthermore, because schools reflect society as a whole, major obstacles standing between students and a real education (that is, between students and real options) go way beyond the schools and are part of American society as a whole. Expanding on these two points, my optimism about students' abilities and my pessimism about institutional obstacles interfering with those abilities, will be the subject of the remainder of my talk.

Before doing that, let me tell you something about myself—who I am, what I have done, where I teach, and how I came to be a teacher. First of all, I entered teaching relatively late in life, being well in my thirties before obtaining a New York State teaching certificate. I always wanted to teach but never thought I could live on the money. Consequently, I spent a number of years in the business world before becoming a teacher. I worked for two major corporations, the International Harvester Company and IBM, and had my own small business for a while. I attended graduate school twice, first studying history and later taking an Ed.D. in reading, specializing in psycholinguistics and literary theory. While doing all of this, I always managed to satisfy my desire to teach by moonlighting at various colleges as a part-time professor, teaching courses in history and English. I have worked as an English teacher in two school districts:

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"I said to myself, 'And this kid is supposed to be retarded?' By the way, on the last day of school, M. J. sought me out and asked for a list of books by Orwell so he could read more on his own over the summer before starting eleventh grade."

one a rural district in the northernmost reaches of Appalachia where many of my students came from economically and culturally disadvantaged backgrounds, and the other a suburban district not unlike Fairfax County where the students tend to be the sons and daughters of highly educated, highly successful professional people. I have taught National Merit students, learning disabled students, and every other kind of student one sees in public schools.

From my experience as a public school teacher, let me reiterate my major points: all students can learn, and all students can benefit from a program of rigorous academic learning. To illustrate my contention that all students can learn, let me tell you about M.J. I had a tenth-grade student named M.J. who had been in a special program for the educable mentally retarded and who, at the age of 19, was being mainstreamed for the first time. M.J.'s English class was reading Orwell's satire *Animal Farm*, and the students were reading two or three chapters a night as homework. I'll never forget M.J. coming into class one afternoon with tears in his eyes to inform me that Boxer had died, and that he, M.J., felt terrible. He participated actively in the class discussion, riveting the others with his genuine sense of moral outrage. A second and more important story about M.J. concerns Conrad and Freud. His class had read Conrad's *Secret Sharer* and, to prepare for a discussion of that book, I lectured to them about basic Freudian theory. As the first day's discussion took its natural course, it happened that the subject of Freud never came up. Nevertheless, at the very end of class, M.J. raised his hand and said how intrigued he had been about Freud and how sorry he was that Freud had not figured in our discussion of the story. As a consequence, M.J. wanted to know if he was on the right track with his thinking, "Now let me see, that captain in the story who was trying to find himself and take charge—he must be like the ego; and that man who came out of the ocean who had killed that other guy—he's just like the id; and that older captain, the one so concerned with rules and everything—he must be like the superego." I said to him, "Terrific, M.J.! We'll start with this tomorrow." And I said to myself, "And this kid is supposed to be retarded?" By the way, on the last day of school, M.J. sought me out and asked for a list of books by Orwell so he could read more on his own over the summer before starting eleventh grade. I don't know if he ever took up more Conrad or Freud.

Leaving M.J. for the moment, let me add some additional support to my contention that every kid can respond to and benefit from an academic curriculum. I have taught students from widely different backgrounds: rural students, many of whom had little or nothing in the way of cultural or material advantages, and suburban students, many of whom enjoy all of the prosperity that twentieth-century America can provide. Nevertheless, and this I think is an important point, I see no—absolutely no—differences between the capabilities of those two groups of students. An honor student in the country is an honor student in the suburbs. A low ability or unmotivated student in the country has his counterpart in the suburbs. The things that I was able to do in my classes were the same in both cases: the students would read a first-rate work of literature, they would engage in class in a serious discussion of that work of literature, and they would write an essay in which they would focus on an important aspect of that literature. As a teacher I have found what I'm sure every teacher has found: that students respond to the teacher's enthusiasm for the discipline under study and to the teacher's high expectations that they, the students, will perform well. From my experience, I would say that students like to be taken seriously and that, if one demands that they read serious things in a serious way, and if they discover that their ideas about these readings are given serious consideration, then students will perform, will indeed "turn cartwheels" in the classroom.

I have been fortunate to work in two excellent school systems, and I think it is important to reflect on why those two systems are so good. I

have already mentioned students; I will now mention administration, teachers, and parents. In both my excellent systems, the administration is the crucial part of the excellence—and let me add that I think the building principal is the single most important figure in the public schools. If the building principal demands high academic standards and is committed to giving the teachers the critical support they need within his or her building, then high academic achievement will be possible in that building. In my rural district, the administration was virtually a one-man operation, with a superintendent-principal who performed every administrative task. And one key to that district's success was his commitment to the academic success of the students. To give you an example, he urged every teacher to devote at least ten minutes of every class to writing. In other words, every student in his school was expected to set pen to paper in every class every single day. A second key to the success of my rural school was the quality of the teachers and their expectations of their students. I'll mention only two of them and what they did. The woman whom I replaced was retiring after 43 years teaching English, and when I entered her classroom to see exactly what materials she had been using (that is, materials that would be available for me to teach with) I was quite frankly astonished to see that she had provisioned the room with class sets of Dickens, Shakespeare, Orwell, Chekhov, and other writers of comparable quality whom she had been teaching to her students. In the room next to mine was the only other high school English teacher, a man who taught primarily American literature. And because of him, every student in that school studied Hawthorne, Melville, Hemingway, Faulkner, Emily Dickinson, Richard Wright. I think that it was the expectations of people like these that made all the students who entered my English class both expect to engage in a rigorous academic curriculum and be able to do so.

In the suburban district where I now teach, many of the same things apply. I work in a middle school which enrolls 1200 sixth, seventh, and eighth graders, all of whom are experiencing that rush of hormones which signals the onset of adolescence. And as you know, there are few things more likely to induce total chaos than the presence of 1200 twelve, thirteen, and fourteen-year-olds in a confined place. Indeed, terror at the prospect of teaching seventh grade has been the demise of many a teacher. But once again, the building principal is the key. The principal in my school runs a tight ship, tolerates no nonsense from the students, demands a rigorous academic program, and, most importantly, supports the teachers' efforts to provide that academic program. The teachers, of course, respond well in this environment, insisting that each student, whatever his or her ability, will engage in an academic curriculum and learn.

A second reason for the high academic standards in my suburban school district is the expectations of the parents. If I were to single out the crucial difference between the school serving the poor rural community and the school serving the affluent professional community, it would be this: in the rural district many parents are more or less indifferent to the school and its programs, and the community is extraordinarily fortunate to have the high quality people they have in the school; in the suburban district nearly every parent expects and demands an excellent school. And to them, an excellent school means that all their children, whatever their ability levels, will participate in a rigorous academic program. There is a good practical reason for their concern; these suburban parents recognize the point I made earlier: education means options. As economically and culturally advantaged as they are, indeed as affluent as they are, none of them owns a factory; none of them owns an estate in the south of France; rather, my suburban parents are affluent because they are successful lawyers, doctors, managers, professors, bureaucrats, accountants, engineers, etc. In other words, not one of these families is so rich that their children will be left independently wealthy. And these parents recognize that the only way their sons and daughters will enjoy the same

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economic privileges they enjoy is by becoming educated—to have options. I, for one, agree with these parents: in our postindustrial society, a rigorous academic education is more important than ever, because, without it, a person has few, perhaps no, options in life. And if this is true for the advantaged in our society, how much more true for the disadvantaged.

The result of these experiences and observations as a teacher has been to make me optimistic about the capacity of all students to participate in and benefit from a program emphasizing academic learning. Nevertheless, as I said before, I am pessimistic about the possibility of making the best possible academic program available to all students. This pessimism stems from institutional problems relating to the schools and from social attitudes.

A major institutional problem facing teachers trying to implement an academic curriculum is the sheer number of students we must deal with day in and day out. I am certainly aware of financial problems connected with teacher-student ratios, but if we are committed to academic learning for all students, as I think we should be, then something must be done about the body count in the classroom. Even in my excellent suburban district, I have 130 students. Many of you have had classroom experience. Reflect for a moment on what it means to have to deal with 130 separate human beings day in and day out for an entire year. As it happens, I believe writing is important, so I try to assign at least one essay per week to each of my students. As a logistical problem, this means that, if I allot to each paper a bountiful three or four minutes to read it, evaluate it, and place constructive comments on it, then I am committing seven or eight hours of my weekend every weekend for forty weeks to the single task of grading papers. Moreover, the best way for students to participate in an English program is to engage in critical discussions which involve high-level thinking skills, and the best class size for this kind of discussion is 15 or 20, not 28 or 30. In fact, I personally would rather teach six classes per day of 20 students than five of 25. If one is serious about academic learning for all students, one must be willing to limit the number of students per teacher to under 100. We all know this, but we all cite practical considerations. Well, I can only say, practical considerations or not, if we think we are going to establish a meaningful program or rigorous academic learning for all students without finding some way to limit the size of the classes, then we are kidding ourselves.

"Anyone who has taught literature will tell you that a heterogeneous classroom is livelier and more stimulating than a homogeneous one. And from my own experience I have learned that I can never predict who will have a stunning insight."

A second obstacle standing in the way of excellence is the common practice of tracking students. We've all heard the pros and cons on this subject. And I can certainly see the benefits in a discipline like mathematics, where a teacher is essentially presenting information to students, and it is much more efficient for all concerned if the students in the room can absorb information at roughly the same rate. But the humanities are not at all like that. The humanities are for everyone; books are for everyone; critical thinking is for everyone. In an English class, the students must engage with the material and participate in a process. As we all know, kids learn from each other, but what we sometimes forget is that it works both ways: the less bright learn from the bright, and the bright learn from the less bright. Anyone who has taught literature will tell you that a heterogeneous classroom is livelier and more stimulating than a homogeneous one. And from my own experience, I have learned that I can never predict who will have a stunning insight—even a student like M.J. can make a point that sparks a lively discussion. Equally important, we're all well aware that peer pressure on adolescents can be overwhelming. Again from my experience, if you track the less able, the less motivated, the less well-behaved into the same classroom and deprive them of the influence of the more able, the more motivated, and the more committed, then peer pressure on these kids not to participate will dominate the classroom. It is a difficult thing for us to admit, but what many parents have feared is all too true: to relegate a student to a lower track in the human-

ities is to ensure that that student will have a desperate time becoming educated.

Programs stressing academic achievement for all students put great strains on the system and force hard choices. Most Americans will at least pay lip service to the notion that pay and working conditions must be such as to attract and keep the best and the brightest teachers. We all know that's true, but what is it going to cost and who is going to pay those costs? Furthermore, parents are going to have to make some hard choices, too. They have to understand that their sons and daughters also have finite resources, and not even a twelve-year-old has the time and the energy to participate in everything. For example, I see middle-school students who take five academic subjects, including a foreign language, and also, by New York State law, take home and career skills, industrial technology, health, art, music, and physical education. These same students also miss classes for music lessons, play in the school orchestra, and participate in the sports programs. I have seen excellent students spread so thin and under so much pressure that, at 13, they're facing a mid-life burnout problem. Parents must realize that, if their children are going to spend time on academics, they're going to have to give up some other things.

Political philosophers tell us that Americans as a people tend to value three principles above all others: liberty, equity, and utility. That is, they always ask: Does this foster individual freedom, is it fair, and does it work? I have stressed the necessity for academic programs for everybody as the prime mission of the schools in the name of individual freedom. That's what options are all about—guaranteeing that the individual can make choices, rather than having them made by someone else. I also insist that academic programs are for everyone, and I base this claim on equity. Just because a student is black, or from a poor home, or because he is not an honor student, or because he may sincerely wish to become an auto mechanic—none of these reasons is sufficient to deprive that student of access to his or her culture. Nor are these sufficient reasons to deprive that student of options later in life. It's just not fair. Nevertheless, probably the biggest obstacle to making academic programs available to all students, and making academic excellence the mission of the schools, is a misguided sense of equity and utility. Some people claim that academic learning is elitist. Others insist academic learning is pointless as far as getting anyone a job. To the claim of elitism I can only say that I find it the worst sort of elitism to deprive poor and minority students of the same education my suburban parents claim as a right for their children. And as for the claim that academic programs are not useful, I insist that they are the most useful of all because they provide students with the most options.

Of these two obstacles the claim that academic programs will not get anyone a job is the most serious and seems to be an aspect of America's current obsession with careerism and credentialism. Let me give you two examples of what I'm talking about. In New York State right now, the Regents Action Plan has mandated foreign language for all middle school students. Many parents are in an uproar, and an eighth-grader was quoted in the Albany *Times Union* as saying that studying French would not get him a job. Americans and their children always seem to limit their vision to the short term and always demand immediate results, but that a thirteen-year-old could make this argument seems to me to stretch careerism and utility to absurd limits. Perhaps he wants courses in the art of newspaper delivery or the science of fast food preparation. And if the general public is sometimes skeptical about the utility of an academic program, even professional educators at times voice the same doubts. The English teacher in the room next to mine in the rural school I spoke of earlier was taken to task by a member of the English Bureau of the NYS Department of Education for wasting the time of his rural students with Shakespeare and Emily Dickinson. He was told that his English class would be better spent with students learning to fill out resumes, job

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applications, welfare applications, and unemployment applications. My colleague defended himself by stating that the State Education Department might be relegating his students to the welfare rolls, but he and they had higher aspirations. I can only say that I agree with him, and that any student who has read Shakespeare and Emily Dickinson can be taught to make out a resume and probably have something to put in it to catch the eye of an employer.

As I said earlier, I am optimistic about the capability of all students to participate in and benefit from a program stressing academic learning. And now more than ever in our nation's history, all of our children need to participate in just such a program. Therefore, I am encouraged by a conference such as this one which stresses the importance of academic learning as the prime mission of our schools. Nevertheless, I must temper my enthusiasm with a note of pessimism. Even though all students can participate in it, the cost of providing academic learning for all students is going to be high. Moreover, providing such programs faces severe obstacles from misguided social attitudes. As educators we are going to have to contend with determined, well meaning, but sadly mistaken opponents who will unwittingly narrow the options of students in the name of anti-elitism or utility. It's disgraceful that a high school graduate can ask, "What's the Pope?" And, as educators, our minimum goal should be to see that this never happens again. But more than that, we need to provide our students—all of our students—with a real education so that, like Rita, they will have genuine options in life. And that, I think, should be the mission of our schools.

Thank you. ■

Teaching to Increase the Academic Emphasis for All Students

Karen Simpson, Principal
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New Braunfels, Texas

What I would like to talk about today is a magical experience. A year and a half ago, I was diagnosed as having breast cancer. Within six months I had double mastectomies—and to make a long story very short, with the help of some wonderful therapists, I'm just as good today (not all the parts are here), but just as good today as I was a year and a half ago.

What makes me share that with you is that I cannot read something that says "The Mission of the Schools" without thinking about that experience and what it did for me in refocusing on my own mission. When I was in Austin, Texas, which is a school district of some 60,000 students, I was president of the administrators' organization, chairperson of several committees, and a very active crusader. Somebody needs to do those things, and I want somebody to do them—but what my experience did was to make me refocus and reexamine where I really wanted my personal energies, and that was in my day-to-day building. I firmly believe that being an elementary school principal is the best job in the United States of America today, and I never, ever, want to do anything else. I thank you for letting me say that. There is something therapeutic about admitting that to a thousand people that you don't know intimately. So—

Late one evening a United States flagship was sailing in foggy seas. The man on the ship's bridge picked up an unidentified object on radar. They radioed to the object requesting identification and told it to change course 15 degrees. A reply came back: "Change your course 15 degrees." Thinking that there had been a mistake, the message was relayed again—"Change your course 15 degrees." Once more the reply was, "Change *your* course 15 degrees." The admiral, who was standing there, ordered, "We represent the United States Navy; change your course 15 degrees." The message was received—"Change *your* course 15 degrees." The admiral, by now incensed, demanded, "Change YOUR course 15 degrees. You're dealing with an admiral *and* the United States Navy." The reply: "Change your course, admiral; I'm a lighthouse." I promise I did not know you were the lighthouse school district; I thought we were.

Education, like that ship and the lighthouse, has a tendency toward miscommunication. School provokes an intense interest from our society, and rightly so. Various segments of society, however, are not bonded in communicating their philosophies of education and goals for our youth, much less how to achieve those goals. Legislators pass laws regarding education, sometimes in the last minutes of the session. Parents ask for accountability and the business world pleads for a certain kind of product, if you will, from our schools. Volumes of research studies exist. Different influential individuals and groups interpret those results and apply them, again, sometimes in ways never intended by the initial researchers. They have definitions of effective schools, definitions of excellent schools, definitions of good schools. By selective orientation, one could document any point of view in a quest for the ideal for all students, and, thus, new sets of demands are placed in the hands of educa-

tors. We get caught up in those demands and sometimes lose sight of what we are all about.

Everyone of you works for a large school system. I'm sure you could cite your own example of some bureaucratic communication breakdown. Let me tell you mine. My first principalship was very much like that miscommunication between the admiral and the lighthouse. I found out about my assignment as principal of Becker Elementary School in Austin, Texas, when I read about it in the Friday newspaper the day before I was to be married. I quickly grabbed the city map and rushed out to find my school. I found it. I took the grand tour and went back to my car and cried. Becker was an inner-city school. A large federal housing project was the school's major feeder source. There was a lot of vandalism. Teachers were encouraged to leave as soon as school was dismissed because the neighborhood was considered unsafe. The school consisted of an old two-story building surrounded by portable classrooms, the paint was peeling, there were holes in the sheet rock, and hard-core graffiti covered the outside walls. There was no playground for the children and no parking lot for the teachers; slashed tires were a common occurrence. I knew the police in that area by a first-name basis and it was not at all unusual for them to come by and have coffee and check up on us. Becker served 750 students, prekindergarten through sixth grade, and only seven of those children did not participate in the free-lunch program. Eighty-seven percent were classified as Limited English Proficient, and daily attendance averaged approximately 89 percent. Becker offered every federal and state program known to man. I used to jokingly refer to it as the "Red Cross School" because people were always putting on their capes and rushing out to save us. Our biggest problem, and I know so many of you will identify with this, is that none of those programs communicated goals with each other. Everybody expected the local principal and the staff to cooperate without question. Red tape and federal paperwork far outweighed services to children. It was easy to fall into the trap of letting programs dictate the instructional emphasis, or, as in the case of Becker, the lack of instructional emphasis.

"It was easy to fall into the trap of letting programs dictate the instructional emphasis, or, as in the case of Becker, the lack of instructional emphasis."

During the first few months I was there, I was in a kind of numb zone; I wasn't doing any overt harm, but I wasn't helping. The staff cared, but they were really burdened by their perceptions of what was an overwhelming task. Across the front of our school could have been the motto, "Ain't it awful; these kids will never learn."

One of the very first things I did when I was assigned to Becker was look at the instructional supply order list. On that list was an order for 1,000 yellow legal pads. Well, I had had all those classes in college, but I could not, for the life of me, figure out what a school, any school, much less an elementary school, would need 1,000 legal pads for. I asked the secretary, she said, "Oh, Mrs. Simpson" (I had been Mrs. Simpson for three days), "that's easy, we have to have them to cover the desks so that the children can work." I said, "What are you talking about?" and, true, the desks were so carved up and so old that each child was issued a yellow legal pad the first day of school to put down on his desk top so that he could put his paper on top of it and complete his work. After the first six weeks, I found out that the teaching emphasis was not on curriculum and instruction but on management and organization, and that management was misleading: 60 students would go into reading labs and break into 10 groups, the groups would rotate to a new teacher and a new concept every ten minutes. It looked good, but guess what our test scores were like? Those kids could have gotten wonderful scores in movement. Spot monitoring also showed that the students were not understanding their tasks. It was frustrating to all of us, and there I was, a 29-year-old brand-new principal; I knew it wasn't right, the feel wasn't there, but I wasn't sure what I should be doing.

Then, in November, Rudy enrolled. Rudy was a beautiful, brown-haired, brown-eyed child with the most engaging smile. He entered our school full of trust; he was ten and in the second grade. Rudy qualified for every one of those programs we had. He was classified emotionally disturbed, in need of a speech therapist, had to have bilingual instruction, qualified for what was then Title I, Migrant, etc. Yet, on the last line of Rudy's individual education plan, the psychologist had written, "Rudy must have consistency in order to learn." I'm going to repeat that because it is so important to where we are going with Rudy: "Rudy must have consistency in order to learn." But in the program we had, the most consistency Rudy would have would be 45 minutes with his homeroom teacher. Mastering his daily schedule could have been a pretest for the gifted and talented program at another school. So, with Rudy's file in hand, I naively went downtown to the central office and asked for a meeting of all of these different people to sit down and make a plan for Rudy; I really thought that was what would happen. I came away empty-handed. I was told that failure to comply with everything in our program would violate federal regulations. I got program-oriented responses to a problem which was Rudy-oriented. It was at this time that I really began to look at my own mission, although I certainly would not have thought about it in those terms then, and that mission was to create a school where students like Rudy could come and have an academic education geared for them—one that made sense. The system has to take what it knows about education and apply that to kids. I don't want kids coming already labeled bilingual, Chapter etc., etc., etc. Yet an alarming percentage of those kids were already signed, sealed, delivered, and obediently following their difficult schedules, rotating three, four, five, six times daily. The more I talked to directors of programs, the more I felt that what was best for the Rudys of this world was rarely, if ever, considered. We have to find ways to communicate with each other, because every decision needs to be based on what is best for the Rudys.

"I got program-oriented responses to a problem which was Rudy-oriented."

Following my visit to those district offices, and never one to be stopped by a simple "no," I decided that a visual scenario of Rudy's day would best prove our point. So I took my Polaroid and followed Rudy through his day (eight different places) and took those pictures to the superintendent, informing him of Rudy and our problems. He was wonderful. This man who was in charge of a large urban school district, thousands of children, took the time to visit with me to show me that he did indeed care about Rudy and gave me the green light to look at alternatives. I also managed to uncover three other advocates in the district. One was the person who was in charge of finances for federal programs (and I learned very early that the money people have to be on my side if I am to find ways to work within the system). The second was an assistant superintendent for special services who had many state connections, and I had the support of the director of the office of research and evaluation. This director's support meant that I not only had the data which would give my crusade legitimacy, but also that I had access to an incredible knowledge base for me and the staff as we strove to find some of the answers for our Rudys. I must not forget the core group of excited, committed teachers who took ownership and stretched the possibilities. They were my support base, my trampoline, to help me bounce back. We had our share of disappointments during those efforts. The Texas Deputy Commissioner of Education told us that we could not redo the funding source, but accepting that as an answer meant accepting failure, and we rather chose to believe that we hadn't gotten the right information to the right people. We ended up getting all our pieces pulled together, wrote a proposal, took it to the superintendent, who then took it to the board of school trustees, where it was approved. And what was this very simple proposal? We took our money—primarily from, then, Title I sources—and developed a plan which didn't label children. Every teacher, with the exception of special education, became a classroom teacher. We reduced

"And what was this very simple proposal? We took our money - primarily from, then, Title I sources - and developed a plan which didn't label children."

the student/teacher ratio to 15:1, and our kids became like other kids; they just stayed in a classroom. We followed the direct teach model with heavy emphasis on time-on-task and sequential curriculum. Our program was expensive because the school district had to commit one local teacher for every Title I teacher. Austin put up approximately $100,000 to achieve that 15:1 ratio, but what better way to spend our money then on direct services to our children? And we got results, and those results were exciting. The teachers accepted accountability for students, test scores went up dramatically the first two years and then began to level, our attendance went to 96 percent, and our corporal punishment and suspension rate went from one of the highest in the district to the lowest. We went from the district's leader for the highest rate of teacher transfer requests out to the highest rate of teacher transfer requests in. We had a community school program which grew by leaps and bounds, and, at the same time, one of the fifth-grade teachers came up with a beautification project. She was able to get a mini-grant for the school's gifted and talented students to paint murals on the walls. With this involvement by children, our vandalism rate decreased dramatically. When I left Becker, we had, at that time, 15 walls from floor to ceiling that were covered with murals that the students had done. Each year they selected a different theme. One year it was famous Texans, and one year famous children in history, and the year that I remember best was on symbols of freedom. We had a student in sixth grade that year who had entered Becker in first grade, one of the boat people; he had made it, his mother and brother had not. He lived with an uncle and was a high-achieving young man, one of our academic stars. One thing that the children had to do was to research their project; we had an all-school assembly where they explained what they would be doing and why they had selected what they had. This student had selected the Statue of Liberty. By the time he had finished explaining and sharing with all of us why he had selected that and had brought back to us the meaning of those words written at the base of the Statue of Liberty, we had all been moved.

The school was left alone by vandals and had become a source of pride for the community. Parents would comment when they came in, "This is so much nicer on the inside than what we thought it would be from the exterior." We really did have our problems, though; it was no "Pollyanna" situation.

I'm going to tell you two stories, the first one to make you culturally literate for the second one. I had a father come in one morning, no shirt, no shoes, and tattoos of things on his body that I didn't know that people did to each other. It was awful, and he wanted his child, and he wanted him then. It was a custody case, of course - they were already involved with the courts. I informed him that we would have to have court documents showing custody, and he left. An hour and a half later the judge called and said, "I'm really concerned that this father is going to come back and create some problems. I tried to head him off but I wanted to alert you because I think you are going to need some help." I immediately called district security. Security people came out, they alerted the police and asked them to have an extra patrol. Sure enough, as timing would have it, five minutes before school was out that day, the father came in one entrance to Becker, and the mother came in another entrance, and, of course, the office is in the middle. The father had a gun, and they were screaming at each other up and down the halls, and she was trying to explain why she had done what she had done. The police and the security guards finally got them out of the school and thus ended another day at Becker. The next morning I heard all this incredible commotion out in the hall, ran out of my office, and really yelled at my secretary to call security, "He's back, he's back!" and I rushed out and it was the director of maintenance, and it was the first time that he had seen that we had painted our halls. He grabbed the policy book and read to me the policy about defacing public property and told me I would hear

from the superintendent and he left; and, truly, I needed security more for him than I did for the father the day before. I did hear from the superintendent; it was a wonderful letter - "I love hearing what you're doing at that school. You're turning things around; congratulations to you and your staff. If there is anything at all that I can do to help, let me know." And, you know, from your superintendent, that's top-level stuff.

That first year, we lost eight teachers—two were recommended for non-renewal, and—those of you who have been that route will understand—to me it is the most painful thing I have ever done and probably always will be. Three were reassigned and three requested transfers. What we received in return made a difference in our mission to provide academic learning for all the students. Those teachers' replacements were teachers who had enthusiasm, who knew what the project was all about and cared. They shared a common dedication to the school's goals and you've heard it from every speaker you have had today, and I am going to say it again: they shared a belief that every single child can learn. I contend that generally people feel good about their schools but not about education overall, and I am going to read from "A Nation At Risk" one more time. As Dr. Love said this morning, "Reports, reports," but I think this is so critical to where we are right now:

> Each generation of Americans has outstripped its parents in education, in literacy, and in economic attainment. For the first time in the history of our country, the educational skills of one generation will not surpass, will not equal, will not even approach those of their parents.

Examine with me, then, the impact and requirements for our mission of increased academic learning for all our students. We must create confidence by starting within our own systems. As a principal, I must realize that I need the support and help of central office administrators, and they must realize that I must stand on the front line with the children and have a clear idea of what is needed. We must find ways to communicate, because every decision needs to be based on what is best for all of our Rudys and not on anything else. As instructional leaders, we have to be willing to take the risk and not give up. We must extract words and phrases such as "failure," "impossible," and "not worth the effort" from our minds and mouths. Providing for all students requires a commitment to getting the best teacher in every classroom. It means constantly searching for ways to motivate and help teachers to develop their commitment and skills in teaching.

Let me just say that, from what I have heard in the last two days from Fairfax County, you people do a wonderful job of providing things, motivational things and developmental opportunities for your teachers; I think that's very exciting; and sometimes it means directing people out of teaching. At Becker we defined our goals to the staff, the students, and the parents. Becker became the students' school. They developed pride through recognition of their accomplishments, and we borrowed from Martin Luther King, Jr., a premise which served us well: "If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, 'Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.'" We try to instill in our students respect and dignity for human beings. pride in their work, and a belief in themselves. In conclusion, and as an epilogue to Becker, 11 years later, the Austin Independent School District is implementing a new project where 16 elementary schools have a staff and a program modeled after Becker. The success of these schools will depend heavily on the strengths of the leadership. I truly believe that the principal will be the key to the academic excellence.

As for Rudy, I don't know what happened to him. Even in this techno-

"I did hear from the superintendent; it was a wonderful letter - I love hearing what you're doing at that school. You're turning things around; congratulations to you and your staff. If there is anything at all that I can do to help, let me know."

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logical age there is no way of keeping track of him, but it is my hope and belief that he went where one of you tailored a program to fit Rudy and didn't make Rudy fit the program. The challenge for all of us is not to follow where the path may lead but go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.

I will leave you with the following thought: "Isn't it strange that princes and kings and clowns that caper and sawdust dreams and common folks like you and me are builders of eternity? To each is given a bag of tools, a shapeless mask, a book of rules, and each must build, 'ere life has flown, a stumbling block or stepping stone." Because our Rudys are a stepping stone of the future, WE must be the lighthouses. ■

Academic Disciplines as the Basis for the School Curriculum

Graham Down
Executive Director
Council for Basic Education

Ladies and gentlemen, educators, friends—you're all of those things; I'm tremendously pleased to have the chance to be with you this afternoon. Indeed, when I was welcomed this morning, I ran into a charming lady from the National School Boards Association, Brenda Greene, and she said to me, "What do you think about the topic? and my response then to you, Brenda, and to the public now, is that I admire enormously Bud Spillane's courage in hitting straight-on that most intractable and pervasive of all problems relating to public education, "The Mission of the Schools."

Some of you may have heard this story before, but I always go with successful jokes. I used to run the College Board's Advanced Placement program and this story comes out of that folklore. One can assume that only a male could have been guilty of such an egregious malapropism; I mean no self-respecting female would have had the unadulterated gall to be so confused in the first place. Anyway, in this student's essay the statement appeared: "Beethoven had 19 children and every night he used to practice on the spinster in the attic!" Well, I don't know whether that's Basic Education, but it certainly is one backhanded way of reminding you of what no previous speaker has suggested: namely, that the arts are absolutely central to our culture, and no school can afford to forget this.

When Arthur Bestor wrote *The Restoration of Learning* in 1955, society and our schools were much less complicated. I remember arriving at a modest institution of learning not very far from Princeton, N.J., and they were so desperate in 1955 that I was given tenure after three weeks. Well, presumably that wouldn't happen today. If I may sharpen Dr. Love on a very minor point, Arthur Bestor was a founding member of the Council for Basic Education, and both his book and the Council preceded Sputnik, a small point of historic chronology. Yet we haven't made much progress toward ensuring a strong academic program in our schools. The other thing that bothers me is that this notion that "all can learn," is a new thought. My dear friends, Arthur Bestor said it in 1953 in his very famous "Resolutions" before the American Historical Association: "It is incompatible to a democracy to educate the few and train the many." So please let's get on with it, and not just rehearse this rhetoric!

All right, what I'm really trying to say is that in order to ensure that all can learn, it's not good enough to rehearse the cliche, "Let's restructure schools." I'm going to make seven modest suggestions as to how we might significantly change schools in order to minimize the disparity in academic achievement for minority and majority students. The sobering facts are, ladies and gentlemen, that our "underclass" of the poor and disadvantaged is getting larger and larger. These people have not been able to invest in the majority culture, and the majority culture has not invested in them. And if you don't believe me, read *Tales Told Out of School* by my dear friend Patrick Welsh. I can't remember quite what the statistics are—is it one out of every four black females in their particular school becomes pregnant in a school year? Or there was the gentleman I met in Indianapolis who told me, "Men are spending fourteen minutes a

day with their children. And it was two and a half hours before World War II, and four and a half hours before World War I." I don't care a damn about the accuracy of statistics, but I do ask you to consider the tremendous pressures put upon our schools to be superjanitorial parking lots for the privileged and the disadvantaged alike. And you've got to say, "NO!" to this or that sociological pressure. Now, let me go on to suggest those seven ways in which you might improve our schools, and these are not minor titivations, but major examples of institutional surgery.

"Wouldn't it be wonderful if the first prerequisite to hiring a principal was that of academic distinction?"

Let me try one of them. Now wouldn't it be wonderful if the first prerequisite to hiring a principal were that of academic distinction? But in systems less erudite and sophisticated than the District of Columbia or Fairfax, I have discovered all too often that the principalship is a reward to a retired football coach, a burned-out guidance counselor, or, most insidious of all, dear friends, a failed teacher—a teacher that should have been transferred out of the schools entirely.

The second modest change I would make is that every class be a seminar. The first question I asked your conference coordinator was, "Is there to be a question and answer period?" And I was told "no—it's not feasible logistically." Well, of course it's feasible; it's the only way to get anything done. I know I'm going to be told that the Council for Basic Education is once again being doctrinaire, unrealistic, and generally subversive of the education establishment, and I'm delighted that that is true. But I have just returned from seeing a seminar conducted by one of my colleagues, and the participants represented a wonderful mix of teachers from the D.C. public schools. It was the most elegant display of the ability of the well-educated mind to be precise about language. Just this afternoon I asked somebody else at this wonderful school system to summarize what E.D. Hirsch had said about Cultural Literacy, and he just couldn't come up with it. You see, we don't ask our students to summarize, to define, to do a precis, i.e., to be really precise in their use of language, which is one of the benefits of the seminar mode of instruction.

"If Ernest Boyer's rhetoric about the centrality of language is to be a reality, we must move promptly to a seminar mode of instruction for all subjects, for all grades. It works wonderfully."

My point is that if Ernest Boyer's rhetoric about the centrality of language is to be a reality, we must move promptly to a seminar mode of instruction for all subjects, for all grades. It works wonderfully. And I'll tell you why it works wonderfully: because if it does nothing else, it persuades teachers and students alike that there is no answer to any truly important human question. We have the elegance of ambiguity, and if we do not encourage our students to tolerate ambiguity, and to be enthusiastic about change, then they are not well educated and empowered for a life of learning. So let's not pretend that we are educating people when we are offering them canned materials. Eighty-five percent of our elementary teachers are driven by wretched workbooks, and 85 percent of our high school teachers are driven by those ignominious textbooks—those textbooks that are the lowest common multiple of human pabulum carefully designed not to offend.

Third, we must practice writing in all classes. It is only by writing to learn, not learning to write, that you can teach students about ambiguity. Now let me give you a little example. I started off honest in this country before I became a reprobate administrator telling people what to do, which is so much easier than doing it yourself. You may think this is cultural imperialism—rather it was a classic case of misassignment of teachers—but I taught American history. Now, there wasn't very much to learn, so I didn't take too long learning it. In American history, you have grade levels five, eight and eleven. That's the way we always teach it—from the womb to the tomb, or at least from Christopher Columbus to Pearl Harbor. If we haven't run out of steam, then we teach the rest of it. One of my favorite questions to fifth, eighth, and eleventh graders was, "How new was the New Deal?"

Fourthly, some subjects are more important than others: history (not social studies), English, mathematics, science, geography, government, a

second language, and the arts are the stuff of education. Those subjects are generative, in the sense that they empower all students to lead lives of real meaning, and to be able to learn throughout their lives. Therefore, I would require every school to devote 85 percent of the elementary school curriculum, 75 percent of the junior high or middle school, and 65 percent of high school curricula exclusively to those generative subjects.

Let me put it to you this way: approximately 10 years ago there was a program on television, "Is Anyone Out There Learning?" And that boob of a superintendent thought that bigger was better. Now we know better than that, don't we, Bud? The fact is that this silly man from Denver said, "Well, we have six hundred electives in our system." And guess what one of them was - bachelor survival! And as an aging bachelor myself, I watched with interest how boys were learning to cook. Well, I survive the culinary task of keeping body and soul together by reading the outside of Stouffer Lean Cuisine packages! I hope my message is vivid. Some subjects are truly more important than others.

Now, I'd like to talk a little bit about teachers, fifth point of my seven-point recipe. The other day, I was in Dallas and I ran into a man called H. Ross Perot. Now let me tell you about Mr. Perot. There is nobody with less self-doubt. Anyway, I felt like a sort of microscopic piece of dirt at the bottom of his Texan boots—that's what they wear out there—and to make a long story short, he said, "All teacher colleges ought to be torched." Now, that's a little unfair and obviously hyperbolic, but I believe that no real restructuring of schools can take place if we continue the present mode of teacher recruitment and training. I suggested the best way to recruit teachers is not to do what happened to me when I was at Oxford. For six months I learned all about total education and John Dewey and all sorts of irrelevant things—Piaget and what have you—and then I went in the classroom and taught 45 eleven-year-olds Euclid. That was humbling. It was another classic case of misassignment of teachers, as I can't even manage my checkbook. But quite seriously, I believe there is considerable merit to the proposition of taking teachers from a liberal arts college and bringing them into a structured program based on the hospital intern model. This would give them the opportunity to work under the close supervision of an experienced teacher in a clinical environment for a year. Afterward, they can decide whether or not to face the music or go back to one of these teacher colleges and learn about the philosophical and psychological underpinnings of their trade. My point is, teacher colleges have frequently failed to understand that an integral theoretical and practical learning must take place simultaneously to make any sense for a prospective teacher.

This brings me to my sixth point: professional development is not an option; it should be a requirement to keep a job in teaching. We at the Council for Basic Education are making a modest effort to promote professional development by awarding one hundred-fifty $3000 summer fellowships. Eligible high school humanities teachers may compete for these awards to pursue programs of independent study. The teachers are absolutely rhapsodic about it, and if we play our cards right and offer up incense on the altar, we may end up with another million dollars for fellowships to elementary school teachers. It's always struck me as astonishing that we pay our elementary school teachers less than we pay our school superintendents. Elementary school teachers are probably infinitely more important than high school teachers, and therefore they should be given the same opportunity to compete for fellowships and awards.

The seventh surgical change which Bud Spillane has the courage to bring before this community is of course differentiated staffing—merit pay. There has to be some way of defining merit, of distinguishing between the good teacher and the medium teacher. Perhaps there's a way of

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undermining the NEA stranglehold on our society that insists on a standardized pay scale. You will gather that the NEA and the Council for Basic Education sing different tunes, harmonies and rhythms. However, I am enormously impressed with what Albert Shanker is doing to induce professionalism in the ranks of teaching and move the profession out of its traditional adversarial mode with administrators into a more coherent mode.

Finally, I want to say a few more things about the liberal arts as a basis for lifelong learning. I really don't think that it's my imagination that Shakespeare is more important than Doonesbury. Doonesbury may give us the opportunity for satire in a society that's very frightened of satire, and that shouldn't be taken too lightly. But it seems to me that the humanities particularly, but also science and math, empower our students with a moral sensibility which nobody has talked about today. That's why they are inherently and intrinsically more liberating to the soul, more inspiring to the human psyche. I believe that we are happy in our lives in direct proportion to their having meaning, and sometimes when I look at American foreign policy I want to weep, because it seems to me that our statesmen have never learned history.

What I am trying to suggest is that the liberal studies, the generative subjects, are tremendously important in terms of their moral capacity to imbue people with a comfort about making difficult decisions between right and wrong or partly right and partly wrong. In other words, the liberal studies endow people with an appreciation for moral complexity which is extremely important. I'm not talking about book burning, and I'm not even talking, by the way, about set books, or the great books or a finite list of anything. I'm really uncomfortable with lists because they cater to the American obsession with useful data and tactile finite solutions, which make me quite uneasy. I really think it's hard to argue that a student should know Chippendale rather than Hepplewhite or Piero della Francesco rather than Titian. Or that a student should have read *Macbeth* rather than *King Lear*. I can't deal with that. I'm simply saying that the liberal tradition in our society gives people a common core of understanding about the functions of government; the compromises that have to exist in a free democratic society between the liberty of the individual and the order of the community; and the implacable limits of power to use Commager's marvelous statement after we'd lost the monopoly on the atomic bomb.

The liberal arts are the only serviceable way of developing a generation of literate citizens without which our democracy cannot survive. That's why I believe that government is a basic subject, a generative subject, a fundamental subject. By basic I mean common for all, part of our common heritage. Not Western government—universal government. Clifton Fadiman, another founding member of our organization, wrote in the *Case for Basic Education* thirty years ago that the future of our society was in direct proportion to the improvement of our system of public education, and it is to that goal I have personally committed my life. I feel a great sense of privilege in being invited over to this country and permitted to stay like the man who came to dinner and refused to leave. And coming as I did out of a slum—my father was a parish priest who never made more than the equivalent purchasing power of $4000 a year in a drafty damp vicarage—I guess if I can make it, or at least have the appearance of making it, perhaps other people can too.

Thank you. ■

Report of Discussion

"Mission of the Schools" Conference
Task - Specific Small Group Discussion
3:00, August 5

By the end of the conference, participants had heard from Senator Paul Simon, Ruth Love, Marvin Cetron, John Hynes, Karen Simpson, and Graham Down, as well as those they had heard on August 4. It was time for some suggestions about where we might go from here. Each of the small groups was asked to work on one of three tasks, so that at least ten groups addressed each of the three tasks.

Task One: Actions a school system might take to ensure that *low-achieving students* acquire a higher level of academic learning.

There was a great deal of emphasis, in this discussion, on the importance of the primary-school years, when children are (in the words of one participant) "so eager." One participant suggested "focusing on making a difference at the elementary level—even the pre-school level. It is too late by high school." Substantially reducing student-teacher ratios (15:1 was suggested) and reducing fragmentation of schedules for low-achieving students in these early grades were suggested. It seemed to be an article of faith among participants that schools need to "set the expectation that all children can learn," and many participants called for assigning low-achievers to the very best teachers (in the case of Fairfax County Public Schools, to teachers who have achieved the "Career Level II," pay-for-performance level); a potentially conflicting, but *widespread* recommendation was to avoid homogeneous classes ("the isolation of low-achieving students"), especially in the early grades, but even K-12. One participant said the "G/T has had a negative effect on overall education" and another suggested "giving over-age and low-achieving students access to creative activities and other special curriculum that G/T students have." Another said "G/T has been a negative. *None* of the students benefit."

Low involvement of the parents of low-achievers in their children's education and the need for schools to help parents help their children were cited as problems by several discussants. Several participants called for teachers and principals with strong academic backgrounds and for increasing principals' involvement in instruction. Differences in students' learning styles and the need for training of both teachers and principals to deal with these differences were cited frequently. Changes in instructional techniques to emphasize seminars and coaching so as to "equip students with the tools of specific disciplines" was suggested as a specific instructional change. A number of participants asked for increased outreach toward the community ("marketing education to the general public") and especially toward parents of low-achieving students ("take the classroom into the community").

Several discussants called for more peer involvement in instruction, including "cross-pupil tutoring/peer teaching" and "peer tutoring for ESL students, between ESL and native-English-speaking students." Increased autonomy with accountability, for both school-based managers and teachers, was a common theme. Some called for "more humanities instruction at the elementary-school level."

One participant said that "we've failed at generating imaginative thought; we distort children's culture." One fairly clear-cut recommendation was

to "create a year-long curriculum commission to examine how a subject (example: physics) can be taught to a slow learner."

Suggestions from participants who dealt with the low-achieving-students task provide many potential policy directions. These include:

- Increased attention to resources for academic foundation at the primary grades, including substantially decreased student-teacher ratios.
- More heterogeneous grouping of students at all levels, particularly at early levels, and particularly in humanities subjects.
- Assignment of the best teachers to the lowest achieving students.
- Greater efforts to establish high expectations for all students.
- Changes in instructional techniques to emphasize discussion and coaching.
- Increased involvement of parents and other community members in the school.
- Curriculum-development projects aimed specifically at academic subjects for low-achieving students.

Task Two: Actions that a school system might take to better ensure academic learning for all children K-12.

A number of recommendations by groups that dealt with this task echo those made by groups which dealt with Task One, on low-achieving students; these include reducing student-teacher ratios, increasing the use of seminar-type classes (this was even more strongly recommended and directed to *all* instruction) and coaching, heterogeneous grouping, increased authority for the individual school, ensuring that teachers and principals have strong academic backgrounds, narrowing the curricular focus, attending to different learning styles, increasing parental involvement, *narrowing the focus* of the schools' mission, and educating the public about this mission. These would appear to be strong recommendations from participants for the *entire* school program, even though a school system might want to give them special attention in the case of low-achieving students. In addition, these groups listed the following among their suggestions for school systems to ensure better academic learning for all students:

- Establishing a clearly defined liberal arts curriculum for all students K-12.
- Establishing a well-stated school-system mission—which all teachers, students, parents and administrators understand and are committed to—and then developing a system to monitor achievement of the mission and the goals which constitute it.
- Increasing teacher incentives and tangible and symbolic rewards, while working with teachers to get them to buy into ideas such as Hirsch's and Bestor's.
- Requiring more foreign-language and world-history study at the elementary-school level.
- Involving universities in changing curriculum priorities.
- Assessing the learning tools which we provide to students, especially with an eye toward using tools such as interactive video discs to give students more one-on-one instruction in areas such as mathematics and foreign languages and to provide for different learning styles.
- Encouraging more interdisciplinary learning.
- Giving teachers more "time to think" about instruction.
- Dealing more directly with values.

Combined with the recommendations of participants in Task One groups, these begin to provide an agenda for instructional reform.

Task Three: Meeting society's expectations.

Groups which dealt with Task Three were asked to list the expectations they believed society has for elementary and secondary schools and to list ways that schools can meet these expectations within what Bestor calls the "context provided by (the school's) characteristic activity . . . the primary fact that it is an agency of intellectual training." Following are the academic and social expectations identified:

Academic Expectations

- Developing a culturally literate individual
- Basic skills
- Academic training and academic achievement
- Academic and technological literacy
- Good communication skills
- Exposure to the arts
- Classical education
- Understanding culture and traditions
- Providing options
- Uniformity of knowledge about culture

Social Expectations

- Vocational and health education
- Day care
- Medical care
- Driver education
- Recreation facilities
- "Social skills"
- Sex education
- Diagnostic services
- Sports programs
- "Training to combat the ills of society"

Various comments dealt with expectations for instruction to prepare students for their work lives (e.g., "vocation education," "career education," and "vocational training") and others dealt with byproducts of instruction and school climate (e.g., values). Several participants commented that society expects schools to act as "surrogate parents," to "provide day care," to be "responsible for students when parents cannot be responsible for them," to "handle everything and not bother the parents, or to do (in a word) 'everything'." One participant said that society expects school to be the "institution of last hope—problems come to us to be solved - people come to be heard (frustrations are voiced)."

One group noted that "society's expectations are simultaneously greater than and narrower than Bestor's notion" and that "school systems haven't found a way to 'cut things out'." This group noted that parents say they want "basic education," but that "what they mean by basic education is unclear." They also speculated that these issues may have been simpler in the 1950's when Bestor wrote his book, before teen pregnancy had reached its current level and when fewer identified learning disabled students were in schools. They wondered whether "we need to reinforce the notion of 'taking risks,'" even though this is probably more difficult

in a large system. The group was unclear about the place of vocational education in this context, and was critical of the "state's increasing role in educational decision-making." While they seemed to believe that "the way teachers deliver 'curriculum' is the key, whatever the content and that, if teachers know content and are enthusiastic, students are more willing to learn," the group's final question was whether "educators or society should control the mission of the schools."

This question sounded a theme repeated by other groups. One group closed its discussions by agreeing that "as educational leaders, we must cease to be reactive; we must concentrate on quality rather than quantity of educational offerings. We must establish curriculum priorities based on sound educational principles which promote academic learning and cultural literacy." Another group noted that schools should "reevaluate programs and services we now provide—or try to—and decide what we can do within the purview of our mission, namely intellectual training." Once school people have clarified this for themselves, the group thought, they should "educate society that we cannot be all things to all people," and decide, "what will be done." Educators should decide how to do it, because "we are the professionals with training in this area." In fact, "we—educators—must take a leadership role and a 'proactive' role in evaluating and disseminating results. Only in this way can we act rather than react." Still another group said that, although the task seemed to imply a conflict between the expectations of society and Bestor's philosophy, they didn't "think there is a conflict."

The major recommendations of these groups seemed to be:

1. Clarifying the academic mission.
2. Ensuring that society understands that mission and what schools can and cannot be held responsible for.
3. Publicizing the mission and priorities. ■

What We Have Accomplished and Where We Go From Here

Floretta McKenzie
Superintendent of Schools and
Chief State School Officer
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The title of my address is "What We Have Accomplished, and Where We Go From Here"—a very big question, because each of us would probably answer in a different way. Conferences are as successful as the people who attend them want them to be. I want to thank the planning committee for doing an excellent job. I also want to thank members of the D.C. Public Schools for coming across the river. I have almost 200 D.C. people with me at the conference today, and I am very proud of that because they did not receive an invitation especially from the superintendent; they have come because of their own interest and desire to participate in this first joint endeavor, and I underline *first*. I would like to thank Superintendent Spillane for his visionary leadership in conceptualizing this conference, not only for the conference itself, which brings together two very large and important school districts, but also for bringing the university community into the partnership. We say so much about partnerships, we talk a lot about partnerships and our most natural partners are colleges and universities; I am so pleased that the University of Virginia cosponsored this event also.

Well, I don't know about you but I have been encouraged, I have been enriched, and I have been enlightened; the three "E's." Graham Down had three "R's," and he said these "R's" were good for teachers, but I think they are good for administrators, supervisors, and others as well. We have to recruit carefully indeed, so that we set the kinds of examples and model the kind of behavior that will move our school districts forward. We've got to seek renewal, not just as something that's forced on us, but also as a way of looking forward to opportunities for renewal and plan for them. Retention is important with us too, because with retention comes the continuity of instruction—not the kind of retention that seeks to make the status-quo, but the retention that says that we are constantly learning; we are constantly seeking to develop an organization that works to the advantage of all of the children, WORKS TO THE ADVANTAGE OF ALL OF THE CHILDREN. To develop a school system that meets that goal will be a continual quest.

But as we listen to speakers throughout this two-day period, we recognize that there is some emergency—a critical emergency—that somewhat has taken us over. One speaker indicated that the underclass is growing. In Fairfax you might not be feeling that so keenly, but you can't put a fence around the county. In D.C. we feel it more keenly, and we want to share with you what happens in an urban area because your students, when they graduate, will not all live and seek employment here; they will go all over the world. The better we are able to help them understand the differences and the similarities, the better we will have done our jobs.

We also must recognize, although you might not be feeling it as keenly here, that the student population in this country is becoming more and more minority. We in our school systems all over this country have not been as successful in teaching minorities as we need to be. We cannot excuse our inability to do the job by saying that these youngsters come from poverty circumstances, different ethnic groups, or single-parent homes. We must truly believe that we can teach *all* of the children, and I will tell you that I am more convinced of children's ability to learn than of our ability to teach. I am also convinced that we probably know more than we need to know in order to teach, but sometimes what is lacking is that sense of purpose, that sense of mission, and the will to do, the will to say to a colleague or to someone that we supervise that he or she is not doing the job. These are some of the things that I suggest that we need to do if we are going to be able to handle this responsibility more effectively.

We need to have the will to say that we don't know everything as we listen to the Hirschs and the Raspberrys, who are often critical of what we are doing. Even though we might disagree with them, we must examine very carefully what they are saying, because our clients are saying to us that it is no longer the process of education that they want to hear

about, no longer things like pupil/teacher ratios, what the building looks like, the background of students, or all of those things that we get caught up in, including the textbooks, the audio/visuals, the computers—but what we are able to do with what we have and what the students take away when they leave us.

"More and more we are finding, and I hope you heard it during these two days, that we must be more client-centered and results-oriented."

More and more we are finding, and I hope you have heard it during these two days, that we must be more client-centered and results-oriented. We must recognize that we do have clients, that although school is mandatory we have a responsibility to make it an exciting, a productive, and a rewarding experience. We must also recognize that we cannot keep doing it the same way we have been doing it, and I don't care whether we do a little surgery or whether we just plain change. But so often we want to keep doing it the same way. If our young people are seeing images in commercials which are no longer one minute, but 30 seconds and moving to 15 seconds, and the person who designs these commercials knows he or she has gotten over a message in that short a period, goodness knows that, in six hours, we should be able to get over something. While some people talk about longer school days, longer school years and other kinds of restructuring, I am worried that we do what we can do with the time we have, and whether we are using that time effectively.

Mission, purpose: Where do we go from here? We have got to keep examining time and time again what we are about, why we are doing what we are doing. I think that sometimes when we go astray or we are fragmented that we no longer remember why, and we do as one speaker said, "Add on and add on without throwing some things away." The curriculum can only take so much and should only take so much. Where should we go? Someone also said very effectively that, "We need to share more with parents and with the other clients who support public education what it is that we are supposed to be doing," because so many in our respective communities have different notions of what we should be about.

"We are planning for a lifetime, not only for our respective school districts or our localities or our states, but for this country, for this world, for this universe, with these young people that we have in our charge."

We take on more and more responsibilities, and we often do them well; we feed well, we transport well, we even teach driver's education well. But when it is all said and done, we are not going to be recognized for our feeding programs or for our transportation programs or any of those other social things that we do so well. We will be recognized for the abilities of our graduates, their intellectual capabilities; that's what we will be measured by. We must keep that in front of us. For those subjects that are important, we've got to check and see if our resources are there. If writing, language, and the rest are important, how many teachers do we have engaged in these subjects? How many supervisors do we have? Do we have the material to ensure that we are monitoring and assessing those programs well? The same applies to mathematics and to the other subjects that make up the core of students' education. Are we putting our resources there? Are we putting more into some of the other programs that do not quite make that kind of difference? A lot has been said during these two days, which reminds me of a Chinese proverb: "If planning for a year, plant rice; if planning for a decade, plant a tree; if planning for a lifetime, educate a person." We are planning for a lifetime, not only for our respective school districts or our localities or our states, but for this country, for this world, for this universe, with these young people whom we have in our charge.

We must do our jobs well. And I believe that with this joint endeavor over these two days, we have started something new and something very exciting. We are looking beyond our respective boundaries, trying to peek into that 21st century, trying to visualize what it is that we need to do with and for the young people so that they will indeed lead the kinds of productive and enjoyable lives that we would like them to have, and that when they become the leaders of our cities, states, and nation, they will treat us kindly in our old age. Thank you. ■